THE VALI EPISODE

IN THE RAMAYANA.

A Review

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FOREWORD.

—o—

In the pages that follow I have endeavoured to review briefly the Vali Episode in the Ramayana. It is as an humble student of the Ramayana that I approach this subject. The Sanskrit of Valmiki to which references are made is quoted in original, first in the Devanagari and then in the Telugu characters also, the English rendering of the same being given in the metrical language of Ralph T. H. Griffith. My thankful acknowledgments are due to Messrs. E. J. Lazarus & Co., Benares for the kind permission they have given me to use the rendering. In now submitting this to the public, I venture to crave their kind and indulgent treatment.

CONTENTS.

	PAGES
Introductory Remarks.	1—2
Rama in the Forest: Sitha missing: Search for Sitha.	3--4
Rama meets Sugriva: Vali slain.	5--8
Vali impeaches Rama.	8--18
A brief analysis of the impeachment: Four main Counts.	18—20
The Vanaras and the Rakshasas: their chief characterestics.	20—29
Vali's 4th Count: Vali's strength: Rama's might: Is Rama self-interested?	30—58
Vali's 3rd Count: Is it to no purpose that Vali is slain?	58--60
Vali's 2nd Count: his alleged innocence.	60—73
Vali's 1st Count: the *modus operandi* Rama adopts to slay him.	73—97
Vali realizes the situation; his apology: his dying request: Rama honors it:	97—99
Concluding remarks.	99-106

ERRATA.

Page	46	Line	15	*For*	of Sitha	*Read*	of his dear Sitha
,,	47	,,	1	,,	The	,,	This
,,	,,	,,	3	,,	of forlorn	,,	of the forlorn
,,	50	,,	17	,,	excile	,,	exile
,,	55	,,	16	,,	friend	,,	fiend
,,	59	,,	7	,,	unrepantant	,,	unre-pentant
,,	60	,,	7	,,	chestise	,,	chastise
,,	61	,,	22	,,	sugriva	,,	Sugriva
,,	66	,,	3	,,	कामत्	,,	कामात्
,,	84	,,	13	,,	विग्रह्	,,	विग्रह

ERRATA II.

Page	3	Line	14	*For*	exhults	*Read*	exults
,,	4	,,	15	,,	gaint	,,	giant
,,	6	,,	19	,,	sugriva's	,,	Sugriva's
,,	54	,,	23	,,	campany	,,	company
,,	56	,,	14	,,	torm	,,	from
,,	59	,,	2	,,	equillibrium	,,	equilibrium
,,	74	,,	20	,,	obsolutely	,,	absolutely
,,	93	,,	23	,,	choses	,,	chooses

THE VALI EPISODE
IN THE RAMAYANA

The Ramayana is the Fountain of the moral wealth of India. The author Valmiki speaks of the hero Sri Rama in language at once simple and grand, eloquent and instructive. Verily has it been said:—

वाल्मीकेर्मुनिसिंहस्य कवितावनचारिणः ।
शृण्वन् रामकथानादं को न याति परां गतिम् ॥
वाल्मीकिगिरिसंभूता रामसागरगामिनी ।
पुनाति भुवनं पुण्या रामायणमहानदी ॥

వాల్మీకేర్మునిసింహస్య కవితావనచారిణః ।
శృణ్వన్ రామకథానాదం కో న యాతి పరాం గతిమ్ ॥
వాల్మీకిగిరిసంభూతా రామసాగరగామినీ ।
పునాతి భువనం పుణ్యా రామాయణమహానదీ ॥

"Where breathes the man can listen to the strain
That flows in music from Valmiki's tongue,
Nor feel his feet the path of bliss attain
When Rama's glory by the saint is sung?"

"The stream Ramayana leaves its sacred fount
The whole wide world from sin and stain to free.
The Prince of hermits is the parent mount,
The lordly Rama is the darling sea."

The Vali episode in the Ramayana offers a puzzle. The sterling character of Sri Rama is too pure to bear a stigma in this or any other respect, too sacred for any blemish to soil it. It is a character ideal yet practical, virtue its base, truth its trunk and unfading eternal glory its crown. Centuries after centuries have gone by, bearing unequivocal testimony to the elevating and ennobling nature of its influence in life; yet is it still fresh in vigor and pure in quality for the benefit of mankind.

The general reader is sometimes carried away by the arraignment of Rama's conduct Vali gives utterance to at his fall, without realizing the full significance of the situation, and many a mind at the first sight is misled: it is not without apology that I now approach the subject. My knowledge is limited; my scope of observation short. In venturing upon this field

I reverently invoke the blessings of the Power Infinite to vouchsafe unto me His Mercy and purify my mind and lead me aright; and at the same time I earnestly seek the good wishes of the sympathetic and unbiased student of the Ramayana.

Rama in the forest is an example of unparalleled devotion to duty. He gives up the royal state, his birth-right, freely renounces the comforts of the purple and the charms of wealth, luxury and power, and submits himself cheerfully to a life of privation and danger in the woods but to prove his father's word. Nature exhults in this instance of self-sacrifice; the world benefits by it. When Rama is encamped on the Godavari, Ravana, the mighty Overlord of the race of Rakshasas in the sea-girt continent of Lanka, manages by guile to lead him away with Lakshmana, his brother, in quest of proffered game and, in their absence, drops in at their hermitage and carries off Sitha, Rama's Royal spouse, who, true to her Lord, spurns his base overtures of love, baffles his guile and maintains

her character unsullied in spite of torture and threats. Rama kills the game and returns but finds her missing; and overcome by grief starts out with his brother to ascertain her whereabouts. Wide and careful their search on the regions of the Godavary and the neighbourhood, yet fruitless. Rama the sympathetic friend of Creation is now immersed in sorrow. A response comes from Nature. The deer in the woods look up, catch his eye and point out the direction in which Ravana fled with Sitha. Their 'Mute expressive influence', sets him on the right track. He follows and comes by Jatayu, the vulture king who, hearing Sitha's piteous cries as she was carried away by the gaint ravisher, had interposed, engaged him in battle and had fought and bled; he is in his last moments. Rama learns from him that it is Ravana who has carried Sitha away; Jatayu is able to say no more for his eye-sight now gets dim; he is gasping for breath; he soon expires, a martyr in Rama's cause. Rama cremates the corpse and offers libations to the departed soul, and resumes

his search for Sitha. In the course of his wanderings he meets Kabandha, a monster in form, who threatens but is soon overcome. Kabandha, re-generated by Rama's might, mentions to him of Sugriva, a Vanar chief, as one worthy of his favour. Sugriva resided on a hill known as Rishyamuka near the Pampa's waves. A valiant and dignified soul, he was yet sad and forlorn, served by but four faithful vanar comrades in his distressful and gloomy life. His elder brother, Vali, had expelled him from Kishkindha, their kingdom, retaining for himself his spouse Ruma. Sugriva, meek, true and strong could be expected to be of some help to the hero in his search for Sitha. Rama at once sets out following the path described by Kabandha and gains the shores of lake Pampa at the base of Rishyamuka. Sugriva spies the royal brothers from his mountain lodge and at first takes alarm lest they might be spies of Vali, his dreaded foe: but wise Hanuman cheers him up, advises patience, goes forth and meets them, ascertains their story and, announcing himself as envoy from Sugriva, tells them

that Sugriva is desirous of associating himself in league with them. This is welcome news: and Rama with his brother goes with Hanuman past Rishyamuka to the Malaya Hill. There Hanuman points Rama out to Sugriva and tells him that he is the eldest-born of the King Dasaratha of Ayodhya and the glory of the ancient Royal line of Ikshwaku, now in the woods for a time, but to save his father's word to his step-mother, true to duty's path, and is followed by his faithful younger brother Lakshmana: Rama is now in quest of his Royal Queen, Sitha, whom Ravana has carried away by stealth, and is going about to trace out and punish that miscreant. Sugriva at once stretches out his right hand and earnestly beseeches Rama to accept his proffered alliance and Rama readily yet deliberately grants this request. Their league thus cemented, Rama listens to sugriva's sad tale and vows the destruction of Vali the evil-doer. Sugriva in gratitude thanks Rama and, assured of his strength, marches out to the gates of Kishkindha and calls out to Vali, who issues forth. A duel

ensues. Sugriva is worsted and put to flight. Yet Rama takes no steps. This is because he finds both the combatants quite alike in form, shape, size, color and features, hardly distinguishable each from the other; nor had Rama been apprised of this fact before. He, however, comforts Sugriva, marks him with a garland of forest flowers and with this recognition sends him out once again. Sugriva speeds forth and offers a sharp challenge to his inveterate foe. Vali now springs on his feet, determind this time to annihilate Sugriva. His wife Tara interposes, requests him to pause and think before he takes angry leap, counsels patience and truce and reconciliation, but in vain. Vali is obstinate and in his ire and fury heeds not her wise words and wearing this time the golden pendant necklace, the gift of his sire Indra, the King of the Celestials, sallies forth and closes with Sugriva in deadly combat. Sugriva fights hard; yet is sore pressed in the field and reduced to straits. Now, seeing Sugriva's indefensible plight, Rama from aside draws his bow and forth flies an

unerring shaft which strikes Vali in the breast and at once casts him to the ground.

Then as Rama and Lakshmana approach, Vali turns to Rama and accuses him in terms keen and sharp and sarcastic in the fancied conviction of the merit of his cause and of injustice done to him:

He says:— (Vide Kishkindha Kanda; canto 17.)

पराङ्मुखवधं कृत्वा को नु प्राप्तस्त्वया गुणः ।
यदहं युद्धसंरब्धः शरेणोरसि ताडितः ॥ १५
रामः करुणवेदी च प्रजानां च हिते रतः ।
सानुक्रोशो जितोत्साहः समयज्ञो दृढव्रतः ॥ १६
इति ते सर्वभूतानि कथयन्ति यशो भुवि ।
दमश्शमः क्षमा धर्मो धृतिस्सत्यं पराक्रमः ॥ १७
पार्थिवानां गुणा राजन् दण्डश्चाप्यपराधिषु ।
तान् गुणान् संप्रधार्याहमग्र्यं चाभिजनं तव ॥ १८
तारया प्रतिषिद्धोऽपि सुग्रीवेण समागतः ।
न मामन्येन संरब्धं प्रमत्तं योद्धुमर्हति ॥ १९

इति मे बुद्धिरुत्पन्ना बभूवादर्शने तव ।
न त्वां विनिहितात्मानं धर्मध्वजमधार्मिकम् ॥ २०

जाने पापसमाचारं तृणैः कूपमिवावृतम् ।
सतां वेषधरं पापं प्रच्छन्नमिव पावकम् ॥ २१

नाहं त्वामभिजानामि धर्मच्छद्माभिसंवृतम् ।
विषये वा पुरे वा ते यदा नापकरोम्यहम् ॥ २२

न च त्वामवजाने च कस्मात्त्वं हन्स्यकिल्बिषम् ।
फलमूलाशिनं नित्यं वानरं वनगोचरम् ॥ २३

मामिहाप्रतियुध्यन्तमन्येन च समागतम् ।

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भूमिर्हिरण्यं रूप्यं च विग्रहे कारणानि च ।
अत्र कस्ते वने लोभो मदीयेषु फलेषु वा ॥ २६

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त्वं तु कामप्रधानश्च कोपनश्चानवस्थितः ।
राजवृत्तैश्च संकीर्णश्शरासनपरायणः ॥ ३१

न तेऽस्त्यपचितिर्धर्मे नार्थे बुद्धिरवस्थिता । ३२

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हत्वा बाणेन काकुत्स्थ मामिहानपराधिनम् ॥ ३३

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अधार्यं चर्म मे सद्भी रोमाण्यस्थि च वर्जितम् ।
अभक्ष्याणि च मांसानि त्वद्विधैर्धर्मचारिभिः ॥ ३६

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चर्म चास्थि च मे राजन् न स्पृशन्ति मनीषिणः ।
अभक्ष्याणि च मांसानि सोऽहं पञ्चनखो हतः ॥३८
तारया वाक्यमुक्तोऽहं सत्यं सर्वज्ञया हितम् ।
तदतिक्रम्य मोहेन कालस्य वशमागतः ॥ ३९

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त्यक्तधर्माङ्कुशेनाहं निहतो रामहस्तिना ।

अशुभं चाप्ययुक्तं च सतां चैव विगर्हितम् ।
वक्ष्यसे चेदृशं कृत्वा सद्भिस्सह समागतः ॥ ४३

उदासीनेषु योऽस्मासु विक्रमस्ते प्रकाशितः ।
अपकारिषु तं राजन् न हि पश्यामि विक्रमम् ॥ ४४

दृश्यमानस्तु युद्धयेथाः मया यदि नृपात्मज ।
अद्य वैवस्वतं देवं पश्येस्त्वं निहतो मया ॥ ४५

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मामेव यदि पूर्वं त्वं एतदर्थमचोदयः ।
मैथिलीमहमेकाह्ना तव चानीतवान्भवेत् ॥ ४७

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सुग्रीवप्रियकामेन यत्कृतेऽस्मि हतस्त्वया ॥ ४८
कण्ठे बध्वा प्रदद्यां ते निहतं रावणं रणे ।
न्यस्तां सागरतोये वा पाताळे वाऽपि मैथिलीम् ॥ ४९

పరాఙ్ముఖవధం కృత్వా కో ను ప్రాప్తస్త్వయా గుణః।
యదహం యుద్ధసంరబ్ధః శరేణోరసి తాడితః ॥

రామః కరుణవేదీ చ ప్రజానాం చ హితే రతః ।
సానుక్రోశో జితోత్సాహః సమయజ్ఞో దృఢవ్రతః ॥

ఇతి తే సర్వభూతాని కథయన్తి యశో భువి ।
దమశ్శమః క్షమా ధర్మో ధృతిస్సత్యం పరాక్రమః॥

పార్థివానాం గుణా రాజన్ దణ్డశ్చాప్యపరాధిషు ।
తాన్ గుణాన్ సంప్రధార్యాహమగ్ర్యం చాభిజనం తవ

తారయా ప్రతిషిద్ధోఽపి సుగ్రీవేణ సమాగతః ।
న మామన్యేన సంరబ్ధం ప్రమత్తం యోద్ధుమర్హతి॥

ఇతి మే బుద్ధిరుత్పన్నా బభూవాదర్శనే తవ ।
న త్వాం వినిహతాత్మానం ధర్మధ్వజమధార్మికమ్ ॥

జానే పాపసమాచారం తృణైః కూపమివావృతం ।
సతాం వేషధరం పాపం ప్రచ్ఛన్నమివ పావకం ॥

నాహం త్వామభిజానామి ధర్మచ్ఛద్మాభిసంవృతం ।
విషయే వా పురే వా తే యదా నాపకరోమ్యహం ॥
న చ త్వామవజానే చ కస్మాత్త్వం హంస్యకిల్బిషం ।
ఫలమూలాశినం నిత్యం వానరం వనగోచరం ॥
మామిహాప్రతియుధ్యన్తమన్యేన చ సమాగతం ।

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భూమిర్హిరణ్యం రూప్యం చ విగ్రహే కారణాని చ।
అత్ర కస్తే వనే లోభో మదీయేషు ఫలేషు వా ॥

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త్వం తు కామప్రధానశ్చ కోపనశ్చానవస్థితః ।
రాజవృత్తైశ్చ సంకీర్ణః శరాసనపరాయణః ॥
న తేఽస్త్యపచితిర్ధర్మే నార్థే బుద్ధిరవస్థితా ।

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హత్వా బాణేన కాకుత్స్థ మామిహానపరాధినం ॥

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అభాజ్యం చర్మ మే సద్భీ రోమాణ్యస్థి చ వర్జితం।
అభక్ష్యాణి చ మాంసాని త్వద్విధైర్ధర్మచారిభిః ॥

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చర్మ చాస్థి చ మే రాజన్ న స్పృశన్తి మనీషిణః ।
అభక్ష్యాణి చ మాంసాని సోఽహం పఞ్చనఖో హతః ॥
తారయా వాక్యముక్తోహం సత్యం సర్వజ్ఞయా హితం ।
తదతిక్రమ్య మోహేన కాలస్య వశమాగతః ॥

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త్యక్తధర్మాఙ్కుశేనాహం నిహతో రామహస్తినా ॥
అశుభం చాప్యయుక్తం చ సతాం చైవ విగర్హితం ।
వక్ష్యసే చేదృశం కృత్వా సద్భిస్సహ సమాగతః ॥
ఉదాసీనేషు యోఽస్మాసు విక్రమస్తే ప్రకాశితః ।
అపకారిషు తం రాజన్ న హి పశ్యామి విక్రమం ॥
దృశ్యమానస్తు యుద్ధ్యేథాః మయా యది నృపాత్మజ
అద్య వైవస్వతం దేవం పశ్యేస్త్వం నిహతో మయా ॥

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మామేన యది పూర్వం త్వం ఏతదర్థమచోదయః ।
మైథిలీమహమేకాహ్నా తన చానీతవాన్భవేత్ ॥

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సుగ్రీవప్రియకామేన యత్కృతేఽస్మి హత స్త్వయా
కణ్ఠే బద్ధ్వా ప్రదద్యాం తే నిహతం రావణం రణే।
న్యస్తాం సాగరతోయే వా పాతాళే వాఽపి మైథిలీం॥

"What fame, from one thou hast not slain
In front of battle, canst thou gain,
Whose secret hand has laid me low
When madly fighting with my foe!
From every tongue thy glory rings,
A scion of a line of kings,
True to thy vows, of noblest race,
With every gentle gift and grace:
Whose tender heart for woe can feel,
And joy in every creature's weal:
Whose breast with high ambition swells
Knows duty's claim and ne'er rebels.
They praise thy valour, patience, ruth,
Thy firmness, self-restraint, and truth·
Thy hand prepared for sin's control,
All virtues of a princely soul.
I thought of all these gifts of thine,
And glories of an ancient line,
I set my Tara's tears at naught,

I met Sugriva and we fought.
O Rama, till this fatal morn
I held that thou wouldst surely scorn
To strike me as I fought my foe
And thought not of a stranger's blow.
But now thine evil heart is shown,
A yawning well with grass o'ergrown.
Thou wearest virtue's badge, but guile
And meanest sin thy soul defile.
I took thee not for treacherous fire,
A sinner clad in saint's attire;
Nor deemed thou idly wouldst profess
The show and garb of righteousness.
In fenced town, in open land,
Ne'er hast thou suffered at this hand,
Nor canst of proud contempt complain:
Then wherefore is the guiltless slain!
My harmless life in woods I lead,
On forest fruits and roots I feed.
My foeman in the field I sought,
And ne'er with thee, O Rama, fought.

* * *

* * *

Silver and gold and land provoke
The fierce attack, the robber's stroke.
Canst thou desire this wild retreat,
The berries and the fruit we eat!

* * *
* * *

But thou art weak and swift to ire,
Unstable, slave of each desire.
Thou tramplest duty in the dust,
And in thy bow is all thy trust.
Thou carest naught for noble gain,
And treatest virtue with disdain,

* * *

I wronged thee not in word or deed,
But by thy deadly dart I bleed.

* * *
* * *

My skin the holy may not wear,
Useless to thee my bones and hair,
Nor may my slaughtered body be
The food of devotees like thee.

* * *
* * *

But all the wise account it sin
To touch my bones and hair and skin.
My flesh they may not eat; and I
A useless prey, O Rama, die.
In vain my Tara reasoned well,
On dull deaf ears her counsel fell.
I scorned her words though sooth and sweet
And hither rushed my fate to meet.

* * *

Alas! an elephant, in form
Of Rama, in a maddening storm
Of passion casting to the ground
The girth of law that clipped him round,
Too wildly passionate to feel
The prick of duty's guiding steel,
Has charged me unawares, and dead
I fall beneath his murderous tread.
How, stained with this my base defeat,
How wilt thou dare, where good men meet,
To speak, when every tongue will blame
With keen reproach this deed of shame?
Such hero strength and valour, shown
Upon the innocent alone,

Thou hast not proved in manly strife
On him who robbed thee of thy wife.
Hadst thou but fought in open field
And met me boldly unconcealed,
This day had been thy fate to fall,
Slain by this hand, to Yama's hall.

*　　*　　*

Sugriva's foeman thou hast killed
And thus his heart's desire fulfilled:
But, Rama, hadst thou sought me first
And told the hope thy soul has nursed,
That very day had I restored
The Maithil lady to her lord;
And, binding Ravan with a chain,
Had laid him at thy feet unslain.
Yea, were she sunk in deepest hell,
Or whelmed beneath the ocean's swell,
I would have followed on her track,
And brought the rescued lady back,"

The fire and fury of Vali and his excitement and rage are mostly responsible for this impeachment of Rama. It is noticeable tha throughout his speech, this Vanar King say

nothing for himself about Ruma, Sugriva's spouse whom he has ravished. Selfishness, boast and sarcasm apart, divested of its ornate diction, Vali's argument is mainly four-fold.

(i). Vali finds fault with Rama for taking aim at him unawares, from aside, unseen: This is quite unbecoming a hero of his stamp, the heir to the Throne of Ikshawaku, whose very emblem is Dharma.

(ii). Vali is innocent; he has done no harm to Rama: has given no cause for quarrel with him: has coveted no land of his: nor his wealth: nor sought to contest his power. Then, wherefore is he slain?

(iii). It is to no purpose he is killed. As a Vanar, his skin the holy do not wear: useless are his bones and hair: nor can his flesh be eaten.

(iv) Rama is selfish. Rama kills him to fulfil the desire of Sugriva whose cause he espouses for the sake of his own spouse

"A long and close study of the large anthropoid apes—the Gorilla, the Chimpanzee and the Orang-outang--has satisfied me that they possess a soul resembling in some degree that of man. By soul I mean a mental life characterised by the attributes of self-consciousness, conscious personal identity, reason, consciousness and the higher emotions."

The Gorillas.

"It was noticeable that they felt themselves apart from their surroundings. They were shy and withdrew from the company of men. Their physiognomies took on an unmistakable look of the melancholy and sadness. Evidently they could not bear being deprived of their freedom."

* * *

"These characteristics, far from showing that the Gorilla is a mere wild animal, point strongly to a man-like soul."

* * *

"The possession of such intense feeling by

these apes lends considerable weight to the theory which has been so strengthened by the discovery of the remains of "Pithecanthropus Erectus" —'The apeman walking erect' in Java, of the near relationship of the apes to man."

* * *

"The Gorilla certainly takes high rank mentally among the apes on account of the way in which he cares for the family. The young of his species is near to human beings as the characteristics of the wild beast are not so fully developed in them."

* * *

"The Chimpanzee ranks next to the Gorilla in human characteristics. I was greatly interested to observe that as soon as the Chimpanzee was clad in human clothes, he became remarkably neat and cleanly in his habits."

* * *

"Then, the Chimpanzee though a near relative of the Gorilla lives under very

different conditions when in the forest. He does not lead a family life as the Gorilla does, but a troop life and this probably makes him more noisy and demonstrative. To define the difference of their characteristics in two words, the Gorilla is more melancholic and the Chimpanzee sanguine, in temperament. The latter is made more lively by his communal mode of life; while the former, living in a more lonely way, developes a different temperament. We noticed that the Chimpanzees fixed their attention on any object for only a short time, while the Gorillas concentrated their attention and kept it on longer. The Chimpanzee was fitful, the Gorilla thoughtful. The Gorilla resembles the calm slow-thinking man of the Northern Races, while the Chimpanzee is more like the excitable talkative Latin."

* * *

"We found that both the Chimpanzees and the Orangs were fond of wine mixed with

water and that it seemed to be good for them. They were easily trained by kindness and most teachable."

"They were taught to sit at table and sat in orderly fashion. The Chimpanzee Mortiz and the Orangs Jacob and Rose sat in their chairs waiting patiently and politely until the food was passed to them. If Mortiz had enjoyed all the milk he wanted, the keeper had only to say 'Don't you want any more milk? then give it to Rose' and he would pass the bottle to the Orang."

* * *

"It cannot be denied that men can exert a mental influence upon these apes. I have no doubt that there are slumbering psychical powers in these highly organised creatures which men can awake."

"All the apes, when kept amid favourable surroundings, showed a natural tendency to walk upright on their hind legs like men; while this is not direct evidence that they possess a soul, it is strong evidence of their

possessing the same instincts as man. The reason the apes very often go on all fours in a wild state is that they find so many obstructions which they must climb over, but when they find themselves on a comfortable lawn or a sidewalk they walk erect.

"I had two chimpanzees and three orang-outangs who walked perfectly upright and accompanied me in my walks.

"There is no doubt of the power of memory in these apes as has been often proved.

* * *

" It will be most interesting to learn how these apes communicate with each other when at liberty. This is a subject which scientists are now investigating in wild places. The orangs have excellent memories, two of them welcoming a former owner whom they had not seen for seven years."

" The orang is different from the gorilla and the chimpanzee not only in build of body but in temperament as well. If the first is melancholic and the second sanguine, the orang may be

classified as phlegmatic. He is less sulky and selfish than the gorilla, hue not so evanescent and flighty as the chimpanzee. He laughs when tickled, becomes attached to his keepers, but does not welcome every one. His intellect is stronger than that of the chimpanzee. He does not pine away in captivity like the gorilla, being resigned to his fate. The orang is so lazy that even the chimpanzee cannot tempt him to jump about in sport. If he leaves one position it is for a definite purpose."

The ape thus makes the nearest approach to man: and yet is animal in its nature and instincts. As in the human kind, change in its race is also traceable. The Vanar of the age of the Ramayana was a peculiar being. Resembling man to a great extent in his habits and customs and several other respects, he was yet a tailed creature, fierce, nimble, active, sensitive, with extraordinary capacity to leap. He was semi-human and semi-animal. He was the ape-man. His was an intermediate step in evolution. His weapons of offence were huge boulders

and large trunks of trees, also claws and teeth. A number of Vanars possessed mentality akin to humanity though in various degrees of development. They could walk on their hind legs or go on fours as occasion necessitated. In the age of the Ramayana, so very remote in antiquity from ours, when there were primeval forests, these creatures abounded in plenty and they lived in native vigor and flourished like several others of the animal kind of the age in wildest exuberance. A number of them could think and act. Evidences of possession of soul were not wanting in them. A select few were very peculiarly intelligent and strong. Nala knew Engineering and Hydraulics. Nila was a mighty warrior. The most remarkable and powerful however was Hanuman, a far advanced being, an embodiment of forces superior and subtle. In Kishkindha many had made dwelling places for themselves in caves. A sort of Government was kept up among them. Vali was for the time being their overlord, possessing great physical strength: he had besides hoarded enormous wealth: selfishness and animality would seem to have been his main

attributes, while his younger brother Sugriva was somewhat more popular with the ranks; but he was consigned to exile.

The Rakshasa of the age was quite a different creature. Generally huge and somewhat disproportionate in form, he yet possessed great muscular strength. To kill life and revel in blood was his delight. Pride, conceipt and selfishness distinguished him: Cruel in temper, he lived a life of sensuality. A select few, however, following some scientific processes of culture had developed superior powers like man proper: yet were their tendencies demoniac. In might, they could rival the fiercest beast: Of the instances of the development of higher Psychic Powers, Ravana was the most distinguished hero, matchless in might, whom even Indra, the king of the Celestials, dreaded. The use of his acquired powers for selfish purposes made him a Rakshasa. Manlike in origin, and undergoing the same course of training, the Rakshasa was still self-centered. By nature he sought earthly pleasures and his propensities pointed

down-wards, while of the man proper, the normal tendency is upwards. Man selfish, man impure, man given up to carnality and lower instincts and sensual pleasures, means a Rakshasa, in spite of his natural gifts and acquired powers. This type is very well illustrated in Ravana, his sons, his brother Kumbhakarna and several of his captains: some of them by severe penances acquired higher powers, those of manipulating the unseen forces in nature included, but used them for base, selfish purposes. To such power the Vanar in general was a stranger. There was more self-sufficiency in the Rakshasa, more straightforwardness in the Vanar; guile, pride and conceipt ruled the one and simplicity and honesty the other; untruth and faithlessness distinguished that class and truth and trust-worthiness this. A soul possessing selflessness, strength of mind and purity was far above the reach of all diabolical arts, however subtle.

Such in brief would seem to have been the characteristics and tendencies in general of the Vanar and the Rakshasa of the age.

Now for Vali to say that he could capture Ravana and hand him over to Rama and rescue Sita is nothing but self-flattery, a fond expectation beyond any hope of realization. Apologising for Sugriva's delay in going to meet Rama with his Vanar legions, Tara says to Lakshmana that Vali himself, while alive, confessed that Lanka was an impregnable fortress guarded by countless Rakshasa hosts and unless they were all no more, it was hopeless to expect Ravana to be slain. Here are her own words:—

शतकोटिसहस्राणि लंकायां किल राक्षसाः ।
अयुतानि च षट्त्रिंशत्सहस्राणि शतानि च ॥
अहत्वा तांश्च दुर्धर्षान् राक्षसान् कामरूपिणः ।
न शक्यो रावणो हन्तुं येन सा मैथिली हृता ॥
ते न शक्या रणे हन्तुमसहायेन लक्ष्मण ।
रावणः क्रूरकर्मा च सुग्रीवेण विशेषतः ॥
एवमाख्यातवान्वाली सह्यभिज्ञो हरीश्वरः ।

శతకోటిసహస్రాణి లంకాయాం కిల రాక్షసాః ।
అయుతాని చ షట్త్రింశత్సహస్రాణి శతాని చ ॥
అహత్వా తాంశ్చ దుర్ధర్షాన్ రాక్షసాన్ కామరూపిణః ।

న శక్యో రావణో హన్తుం యేన సా మైథిలీ హృతా ॥
తే న శక్యా రణే హన్తుమసహాయేన లక్ష్మణ ।
రావణః క్రూరకర్మా చ సుగ్రీవేణ విశేషతః ॥
ఏవమాఖ్యాతవాన్వాలీ సహ్యభిజ్ఞో హరీశ్వరః ।

(BK. IV. canto 35 Slokas 15—18.)

Ten million million demons guard
The gates of Lanka firmly barred
All hope until that host be slain
To smite the robber king is vain.
Nor with Sugriva's aid alone
May king and host be overthrown.
This, ere he died—for well he knew—
Spake Vali and his words are true.

This being so, Vali could, in vain hope to assail Lanka with any chance of success: Vali with all his might could hardly make a stand against Ravana's sons Athikaya and Indrajit in the field, much less against Ravana: no means open or covert could enable him to gain one inch of advantage in Lanka. Ravana had indeed developed higher powers and proved himself the terror of the celestials and the conqueror of

Indra, Vali's father: he had opposed the Iravatha, Indra's strongest elephant scars by whose tusk were visible on his breast: he had dared to face the Discus of Vishnu and attempt to shake Mount Kailas the abode of Shiva; further, he was an expert in the use of celestial arms in fight to which Vali was an utter stranger. Ravana in Lanka, with his battalions and his own astric powers was too much for Vali who could hardly hope to face the onset against him, in spite of all that he could summon to his aid. It is thus clear that Vali's remark about capture and delivery of Ravana must on the very face of it be dismissed as a vain boast.

Then, as regards Rama's might: Maricha Ravana's friend was a fierce fiend, capable of assuming forms at will; his pride of strength knew no bounds: he had threatened even such a mighty sage as Visvamithra; he had occasion to come in contact with Rama once when he was guarding the sacrifice that sage performed in Sidhasrama and again in the forest of Dandaka. On both these occasions he suffered very severely

and had a very narrow escape for life. He tells Ravana that he can in vain hope to match Rama in the field. Here is his testimony to Rama's power.

न नूनं बुध्यसे रामं महावीर्यं गुणोन्नतम् ।
अयुक्तचारश्चपलो महेंद्रवरुणोपमम् ॥
अपि स्वस्ति भवेत्तात सर्वेषां भुवि रक्षसाम् ।
अपि रामो न संक्रुद्धः कुर्याल्लोकमराक्षसम् ॥

న నూనం బుధ్యసే రామం మహావీర్యం గుణోన్నతమ్ ।
అయుక్తచారశ్చపలో మహేంద్రవరుణోపమమ్ ॥
అపి స్వస్తి భవేత్తాత సర్వేషాం భువి రక్షసామ్ ।
అపి రామో న సంక్రుద్ధః కుర్యాల్లోకమరాక్షసమ్ ॥

"Thou hast not learnt, by proof untaught,
And borne away by eager thought,
That Rama, formed for high emprise,
With Varun or with Indra vies.
Still let thy people live in peace,
Nor let their name and lineage cease,
For Ràma with his vengeful hand
Can sweep the giants from the land."

[Bk. III. canto 37 Slokas 3 & 4]

Maricha further describes Rama in the Forest of Dandaka as follows:—

वृक्षे वृक्षे च पश्यामि चीरकृष्णाजिनांबरम् ।
गृहीतधनुषं रामं पाशहस्तमिवांतकम् ॥
अपि रामसहस्राणि भीतः पश्यामि रावण ॥
रामभूतमिदं सर्वमरण्यं प्रतिभाति मे ।
राममेव हि पश्यामि रहिते राक्षसाधिप ॥
दृष्ट्वा स्वप्नगतं राममुद्भ्रमामि विचेतनः ।
रकारादीनि नामानि रामत्रस्तस्य रावण ॥
रत्नानि च रथाश्चैव त्रासं संजनयंति मे ।
अहं तस्य प्रभावज्ञो न युद्धं तेन ते क्षमम् ॥

వృక్షే వృక్షే చ పశ్యామి చీరకృష్ణాజినాంబరమ్ ॥
గృహీతధనుషం రామం పాశహస్తమివాంతకమ్ ।
అపి రామసహస్రాణి భీతః పశ్యామి రావణ ॥
రామభూతమిదం సర్వమరణ్యం ప్రతిభాతి మే ।
రామమేవ హి పశ్యామి రహితే రాక్షసాధిప ॥
దృష్ట్వా స్వప్నగతం రామముద్భ్రమామి విచేతనః ।
రకారాదీని నామాని రామత్రస్తస్య రావణ ॥
రత్నాని చ రథాశ్చైవ త్రాసం సంజనయంతి మే ।
అహం తస్య ప్రభావజ్ఞో న యుద్ధం తేన తే క్షమమ్ ॥

"In every shrub in every tree
I view that noblest devotee.
In every knotted trunk I mark
His deer-skin and his coat of bark,
And see the bow-armed Rama stand
Like Yama with his noose in hand.
I tell thee Ravan, in my fright
A thousand Ramas mock my sight.
This wood with every bush and bough
Seems all one fearful Rama now.
Throughout the grove there is no spot
So lonely where I see him not.
He haunts me in my dreams by night,
And wakes me with the wild afright.
The letter that begins his name
Sends terror through my startled frame.
The rapid cars whereon we ride,
The rich rare jewels, once my pride,
Have names that strike upon mine ear
With hated sound that counsels fear.
His mighty strength too well I know,
Nor art thou match for such a foe.

[Bk. III. canto 39 Slokas 14—18]

Ravana, though too proud at the time Maricha uttered these words to know their import, realizes ere long their full significance by hard-bought experience.

Here is what one of Ravana's chief ministers Suka says to him of Rama:—

इक्ष्वाकूणामतिरथो लोके विख्यातपौरुषः ।
यस्मिन् नचलते धर्मो यो धर्मं नातिवर्तते ॥
यो ब्राह्ममस्त्रं वेदांश्च वेद वेदविदांवरः ।
यो भिद्याद्गगनं बाणैः पर्वतांश्चापि दारयेत् ॥
यस्य मृत्योरिव क्रोधः शक्रस्येव पराक्रमः ।

ఇక్ష్వాకూణామతిరథో లోకేవిఖ్యాతపౌరుషః ।
యస్మిన్నచలతే ధర్మో యో ధర్మం నాతివర్తతే ॥
యో బ్రాహ్మమస్త్రం వేదాంశ్చ వేద వేదవిదాం వరః ।
యో భింద్యాద్గగనం బాణైః పర్వతాంశ్చాపి దారయేత్ ॥
యస్య మృత్యోరివ క్రోధః శక్రస్యేవ పరాక్రమః ।

"Still nearer let thy gaze be bent,
And mark that Prince preeminent
'Mid chieftains for his strength and size
And splendour of his lotus eyes.
Far through the worlds his virtues shine,

The glory of Ikshwaku's line.
The path of truth he never leaves,
And still through all to duty cleaves.
Deep in the Vedas, skilled to wield
The mystic shafts to him revealed:
Whose flaming darts to heaven ascend.
And through the earth a passage rend;
In might like him who rules the sky;
Like Yama, when his wrath grows high."

[Bk. VI. canto 28 slokas 19—25.]

As a matter of fact, Rama proves himself superior to Ravana when time comes for them to face each other. The virtue of Rama conquers worlds. His is the hand that breaks in twain Siva's mighty Bow in the capital of that Saint-king Janaka, Lord of Mithila, which had baffled the prowess of many a hero from age to age: His again the hand that saps all strength from the Bow of Vishnu which the dreaded Parasu Rama holds out to him as a challenge and overpowered, acknowledges his prowess in these memorable accents:—

अक्षय्यं मधुहन्तारं जानामि त्वां सुरेश्वरं ।
धनुषोस्य परामर्शात्स्वस्ति तेस्तु परन्तप ॥
एते सुरगणास्सर्वे निरीक्षन्ते समागताः ।
त्वामप्रतिमकर्माणमप्रतिद्वन्द्वमाहवे ॥
न चेयं मम काकुत्स्थ व्रीळा भवितुमर्हति ।
त्वया त्रैलोक्यनाथेन यदहं विमुखीकृतः ॥

అక్షయ్యం మధుహంతారం జానామి త్వాం సురేశ్వరం
ధనుషోస్య పరామర్శాత్స్వస్తి తేస్తు పరన్తప ॥
ఏతే సురగణాస్సర్వే నిరీక్షంతే సమాగతాః ।
త్వామప్రతిమకర్మాణమప్రతిద్వంద్వమాహవే ॥
న చేయం మమ కాకుత్స్థ వ్రీళా భవితుమర్హతి ।
త్వయా త్రైలోక్యనాథేన యదహం విముఖీకృతః ॥

"I know thee Lord of Gods; I know
Thy changeless might laid Madhu low.
All other hands would surely fail
To bend this bow. All hail, all hail.
See, all the Gods have left the skies
To bend on thee their eager eyes,
With whose achievements none compete,
Whose arm in war no God can meet.
No shame is mine, I ween, for thou,

Lord of the worlds has dimmed my brow."

[Bk. I. canto 76 Slokas 17—18]

Again, Ravana himself exclaims when pressed hard by Rama in Lanka;—

"In vain I cast mine eyes around
No match for Rama here is found
No chief to stand before that bow
Whose deadly shafts have caused our woe."

अहो सुबलवान् रामो महदस्त्रबलं च वै ।
यस्य विक्रममासाद्य राक्षसाः निधनं गताः ॥
तं मन्ये राघवं वीरं नारायणमनामयम् ।

అహో సుబలవాన్ రామో మహదస్త్రబలం చ వై ।
యస్య విక్రమమాసాద్య రాక్షసాః నిధనం గతాః ॥
తం మన్యే రాఘవం వీరం నారాయణమనామయమ్ ।

[Bk. VI. canto 72 Slokas 10 & 11.]

" Oh, Rama is indeed mighty beyond measure; his astric power is matchless. He whose prowess lays my tried Rakshasa hosts low is, I ween, verily that eternal changeless Lord Narayana himself."

And Mandodari Ravana's Queen, tells him when he is about to sally out to fight against Rama for the third and the last time.

रामो न जीयते युद्धे त्वया चान्यैः कदाचन ।
रामो देववरस्साक्षात् पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः ॥

రామో న జీయతే యుద్ధే త్వయా చాన్యైః కదాచన ।
రామో దేవవరస్సాక్షాత్ పురాణపురుషోత్తమః ॥

In effect she means that Rama can never be overcome by Ravana or anybody else. Rama is the best of the Gods, the eternal unchangable He.

A notion prevails in some quarters that because of the golden necklace he wore, Vali was invincible in open fight, as he was able to attract half the might of his adversary. This is quite unfounded. What is said of the Necklace is that it was able to sustain Vali's life for a time after his fall; that was all its capacity.

शक्रदत्ता वरा माला कांचनी वज्रभूषिता ।
दधार हरिमुख्यस्य प्राणां स्तेजःश्रियं च सा ॥

శక్రదత్తా వరా మాలా కాంచనీ వజ్రభూషితా ।
దధార హరిముఖ్యస్య ప్రాణాం స్తేజఃశ్రియం చ సా ॥

[Bk. IV. canto 17 Sloka 5]

"That golden chain with rich gems set,
The choicest gift of Sakra yet
Preserved his life nor let decay
Steal strength and beauty's light away."

As against Rama, it could avail but little: on the other hand Rama's might is incomparably superior and matchless. Among the powers he had acquired as their fittest recipient from the sage Viswamithra is an Astra known as (परतेजोऽपकर्षणशक्ति) పరతేజోఽపకర్షణశక్తి which enabled him to draw to himself the power of his opponent: in other words, Rama's Astra Sakti was such that:—

"This smites the foe in battle strife
And takes his fortune, strength and life."

And of Rama's might when Khara was laid low, the Celestials sang:—

अहो बत महत्कर्म रामस्य विदितात्मनः ।
अहो वीर्यमहो दाक्ष्यं विष्णोरिव हि दृश्यते ॥

అహో బత మహత్కర్మ రామస్య విదితాత్మనః ।
అహో వీర్యమహో దాక్ష్యం విష్ణోరివ హి దృశ్యతే ॥

"Oh wondrous deed, the bards began,
The noblest deed of virtuous man
Heroic strength that stood alone
And firmness even as Vishnu's own."

[Bk III canto 30 Sloka 36]

Hanuman is an extraordinary soul: In him, as his very foe Ravana acknowledges, meet the best qualities of the mind and the body; and of him Ravana adds:—

"But none of all their woodland throng
Was half so terrible and strong."

And Hanuman is a worshipper of character, pure and faultless. He tells Ravana direct that Rama's supreme might can undo and do the worlds with the elements and their moveable and immoveable appendages.

(Book V canto 51, Slokas 39—40)

Again, perfect confidence in Rama, a confidence which Rama's deeds in the Ramàyana themselves justify, is thus expressed by Lakshmana to calm Sitha's fear when she mistakes Maricha's artful cry from afar in the woods as Rama is about to slay him:—

पन्नगासुरगन्धर्वदेवमानुषराक्षसैः ।
अशक्तस्तव वैदेहि भर्ता जेतुं न संशयः ॥

పన్నగాసురగంధర్వదేవమానుషరాక్షసైః ।
అశక్తస్తవ వైదేహి భర్తా జేతుం న సంశయః ॥

(Book III canto 45 Sloka 9 etc.)

* * *

"Videhan Queen be sure of this—
And at the thought thy fear dismiss—
Thy husband's mightier power defies
All Gods and angels of the skies,
Gandharvas and the sons of light,
Serpents and rovers of the night.

* * *

There lives not one whose heart would dare
To meet thy Rama in the fight.

* * *

The mightiest strength can never withstand
His eager force, his vigorous hand;
No, not the triple world allied
With all the immortal Gods beside."

Such in brief are some of the exploits that typify Rama's greatness. His might rooted in

virtue is proof against all Evil: it is undefiable; unconquerable.

Vali as a Chief of fame and intelligence must at any rate have been aware how, when yet a lad hardly out of his teens, Rama undertook to guard the sacrifice the sage Visvamitra performed in Siddhasrama and there killed the cruel demon Subahu and put to flight fierce Maricha; how he achieved signal success with the Bow of Siva and the Bow of Vishnu which had defied the warrior might of ages; and how again the hero single-handed dealt destruction to the finest Rakshasa army, 14,000 strong, in Janasthana, slaying at the same time their powerful captains Dushana, Trisira and the proud Khara, and subsequently Maricha also, when he dared to tempt him in the shape of a fair-skinned antelope in Panchavati on the Godavari; and how in this manner he cleared the whole of the Forest of Dandaka of the dreaded domain of the demoniac races that had colonized that fair and fine tract. These are events enough to convince any of Rama's prowess, events of

which Vali was a contemporary: again, his own Queen Tara reminds him in time of Rama's might and warns. In the face of these circumstances Vali's utterance that if Rama faced him he would have been no more cannot but be regarded as highly presumptuous, an idle boast, perhaps excusable in his painful condition, arrow-struck as he lay, when about to expire, yet heedless of his serious fault in life that exposed him to danger and worked his fall. What then could possibly have happened had Vali been given an opportunity to meet Rama before his arrow smote him need not now be conjectured, but may be left to be considered later on.

Vali further accuses Rama of irritability, weakness, passion, proneness to desire and disregard to duty, and says that it is to meet Sugriva's wishes he has killed him.

"But thou art weak and swift to ire
Unstable, slave of each desire,
Thou tramplest duty in the dust
And in thy bow is all thy trust.

* * *

"Sugriva's foeman thou hast killed
And thus his heart's desire fulfilled."

Vali insinuates that in killing him Rama was no less influenced by a desire to regain Sitha: does this accusation rest on proper foundation?

Again, a modern scholar of high attainments in his work entitled "A critical appreciation of Kalidasa's Megha Sandesa" makes a casual reference to the Vali-incident in the Ramayana and holds that Rama "was in the extremity of the great agony to which he had been driven, ready to take advantage of any help that was offered to him under any condition, so that he might see if thereby he could come to know the whereabouts of Sitha and be in a position to recover her".

He adds that in entering into alliance with Sugriva "Rama did not and could not take the trouble of going through a careful consideration of the moral worthiness or otherwise of what he was asked to perform for Sugriva as an ally of his."

He further continues, "The touch of realism in the depiction of Rama truly shows to us the very great depth of forlorn hopelessness into which he had fallen in consequence of the loss of his dear Sitha. In that condition, it was not really possible for him to calmly consider delicate questions of morality so as to determine deliberately whether he might or might not take advantage of what itself turned up in his way as a hopeful means for recovering his lost Sitha."

The reputation of Rama is too high and too sacred to render itself liable to any such accusations. This modern critic, Professor Rangachar, is with the best of intentions sadly mistaken in his off-hand view as above expressed.

Now what is the situation? It is true Rama is in search for his Royal spouse: she accompanies him to the woods in spite of his advice. When she expresses her desire to go with him he clearly warns her beforehand of the dangers lurking in the forest. It is a life of perfect contrast to the go of things in the Palace: yet is her

devotion to her Lord too strong to make her change her resolve. Rama still hesitates: she however does not swerve from her purpose; she finally appeals to chivalry in these memorable words:

किं त्वाऽमन्यत वैदेहः पिता मे मिथिलाधिपः ।
राम जामातरं प्राप्य स्त्रियं पुरुषविग्रहम् ॥

కిం త్వాఽమన్యత వైదేహః పితా మే మిథిలాధిపః ।
రామ జామాతరం ప్రాప్య స్త్రియం పురుషవిగ్రహం ॥

(Bk II canto 30 Sloka 3)

"Why did the king my sire, who reigns
O'er fair Videha's wide domains,
Hail Rama son with joy unwise
A woman in a man's disguise."

* * *

and adds

"Not even in fancy can I brook
To any guard save thee to look:
Let meaner wives their houses shame,
To go with thee is all my claim."

Rama then as his bounden duty is obliged to take Sitha and so he permits her to go with

him: Rama's surely is not the soul to do anything and everything in any way and every way. Nor is "All's well that ends well" his maxim: His principles are high and his actions but illustrations of them on right lines. His is an exemplary life in every way. It is of him that sage Viswamithra says:—

अहं वेद्मि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वसिष्ठोऽपि महातेजाः ये चेमे तपसि स्थिताः ॥

అహం వేద్మి మహాత్మానం రామం సత్యపరాక్రమమ్ ।
వసిష్ఠోఽపి మహాతేజాః యే చేమే తపసి స్థితాః ॥

"I know the hero Rama well
In whom high thoughts and valor dwell
So does Vasishṭa: so do these
Engaged in long austerities."

[Book I canto 19 Slokas 13-14]

His free renunciation of the Throne, the glory of the purple, by birth right his, when he was called upon and pressed to wear the crown and his thorough disinclination to retrace his steps even in spite of the suppliant request of his

dear brother Bharatha to whom the kingdom is since assigned but who will not have it and cheerfully lays the signs of Royalty at his feet, mark him out to be the high-souled character he actually is.

Deprived of Sitha while encamped on the banks of the Godavari by Ravana's guile which taking undue advantage of his grace, large-mindedness and unsuspecting nature, ensnared him, the hero is obliged to look out for her; and he does so as a thoroughly human character par excellence and in a way befitting his birth and dignity, ever mindful of duty's claims.

Kabandha speaks to Rama about Sugriva as a reliable soul who could be of help to him in his search for Sitha, but Sugriva is himself in excile, his stronger brother Vali having banished him and taken possession of his spouse. The effect of this news on Rama is immediate. He is a Kshatria: the bluest of blue blood courses in his veins. His, as such, is a higer platform. To him every body looks up for protection; he learns to his grief that Sugriva has been deprived

of his wedded partner in life. Now the evil-doer deserves punishment. To apply this corrective is his duty, and as a true Kshatria he realizes it at once. He feels that his mission is not to cling to affections: nor allow himself to be swayed by desires; he cannot do all that he wishes to do. But he should do what by virtue of his birth and position he has to do. His is superior nature. His words to Kaikeyi his step-mother very aptly describe his motto; says he:-

नाहमर्थपरो देवि लोकमावस्तुमुत्सहे ।
विद्धि मां ऋषिभिस्तुल्यं केवलं धर्ममास्थितम् ॥

నాహమర్థపరో దేవి లోకమావస్తుముత్సహే ।
విద్ధి మాం ఋషిభిస్తుల్యం కేవలం ధర్మమాస్థితమ్ ॥

"I would not in this world remain
A grovelling thrall to paltry gain
But duty's path would fain pursue
True as the saints themselves are true."

(Bk. II, canto 19 Sloka 20)

Rama is thus not love-blind but duty-bound. Love for parents, love of power, desire for

enjoyment of wealth and prosperity in purple, comforts, luxury, all these he discards but to prove his parent's word. It is not love for Sitha but a call to duty as a true Kshatria that inspires him. It is as imperative as it is sacred. There can be no higher incentive, none truer; here are his own immortal words addressed to Sitha herself:-

विदितश्चास्तु ते भद्रे योऽयं रणपरिश्रमः ।
स तीर्णस्सुहृदां वीर्यान्न त्वदर्थं मया कृतः॥
रक्षता तु मया वृत्तमपवादं च सर्वशः ।
प्रख्यातस्यात्मवंशस्य न्यङ्गं च परिरक्षता ॥

విదితశ్చాస్తు తే భద్రే యోఽయం రణపరిశ్రమః ।
స తీర్ణస్సుహృదాం వీర్యాన్న త్వదర్థం మయా కృతః ॥
రక్షతా తు మయా వృత్తమపవాదం చ సర్వశః ।
ప్రఖ్యాతస్యాత్మవంశస్య న్యఙ్గం చ పరిరక్షతా ॥

"But Lady 'twas not love for thee
That led mine army over the sea
'Twas not for thee our blood was shed
Or Lanka filled with the giant dead
No fond affection for my wife
Inspired me in the hour of strife,

I battled to avenge the cause
Of honor and insulted Laws."

(Bk VI canto 118 Slokas 15 & 16)

Apart from his Dharma, duty in truth, Rama covets nothing. He is quite clear on this point. Mark his words to Lakshmana.—

नेयं मम मही सौम्य दुर्लभा सागराम्बरा ।
न हीच्छेयमधर्मेण शक्रत्वमपि लक्ष्मण ॥

నేయం మమ మహీ సౌమ్య దుర్లభా సాగరామ్బరా ।
న హీచ్ఛేయమధర్మేణ శక్రత్వమపి లక్ష్మణ ॥

"'Twere not so hard for me to gain
This broad land girdled by the main
But even Indra's Royal might
Should ne'er be mine in Duty's spite."

(Bk II canto 97 Sloka 7)

He regards his duty as of paramount importance. In it lies everything centered.

धर्मो हि परमो लोके धर्मे सत्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

ధర్మో హి పరమో లోకే ధర్మే సత్యం ప్రతిష్ఠితమ్ ।

"For Duty is supreme in place
And Truth is Duty's noblest base."

With this duty let anything come as it may: fame, glory, Sitha; without it, Rama cares for nothing.

He relishes naught that means a departure however slight from the path of rectitude. Aberration from virtue he abhors in any shape. The main argument then is plain. Born a Kshatria, in the noblest line of Royalty, he cannot tolerate injustice in any degree. Sin before him must melt from the earthly mould. Every other consideration is subordinate, next in importance to his Duty as the foremost of the Ruling Race.

Hence, deliberately, designedly Rama accepts Sugriva's hand held out courting alliance. Were Rama directly mindful of his own cause, were he influenced by love for Sitha, did he incline himself to private interest, Sugriva is evidently the last factor for him to associate himself with at the time. Vali is strong; Sugriva is weak; Vali is king of the Vanars; Sugriva is a helpless exile: Vali has wealth and influence; Sugriva is forlorn, has but four comrades keeping campany with him in his dire distress: Vali has

resources ready to place at Rama's disposal, if required, and knows about Ravana; Sugriva is powerless, himself in need of help; he has only some ornaments which Sitha in the course of her passage in air when forcibly carried away by Ravana let drop down below: these, happening to fall near there, he picks up and treasures and shows to Rama and Lakshmana who recognise them: Sugriva plainly confesses that he is not aware of the abode of the miscreant Ravana.

न जाने निलयं तस्य सर्वथा पापरक्षसः ॥
सामर्थ्यं विक्रमं वाऽपि दौष्कुलेयस्य वा कुलम् ।

న జానే నిలయం తస్య సర్వథా పాపరక్షసః ॥
సామర్థ్యం విక్రమం వాఽపి దౌష్కులేయస్య వా కులమ్ ।

"O' Raghu's son I cannot tell
Where now that cruel friend may dwell
Declare his power and might or trace
The author of his cursed race"

(Bk IV canto 7 Sloka 2)

In short, Vali's condition is as attractive as Sugriva's is repulsive. Selfish policy should

readily dictate an alliance with Vali which would mean easy passage with the current. It requires great strength of mind and moral courage to do otherwise. These Rama alone possesses in an eminent degree and his sense of duty suggests to him the course which not might but right justifies: Sugriva is faultless; he is the injured party: his touching appeal is made to Rama in these words:—

वालिनो मे महाभाग भयार्तस्याभयं कुरु ॥

వాలినో మే మహాభాగ భయార్తస్యాభయం కురు ॥

(Bk. IV canto 5 Sloka 24)

"Do thou whose virtues all revere
Release me form my woe and fear."

Insulted honor and injured innocence alike cry aloud for help. As a Royal scion, born heir to Manu's crown, Rama's heart leaps at this call to duty: he feels it his concern to assist the needy, to protect the sufferer and bring the oppressing offender to justice. His very Sitha to him is dearer but with Duty properly done, not in spite of it.

Here is a popular verse of invocation to Rama.

आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारं भीतानां भयनाशनम् ।
द्विषदां कालदण्डं तं रामचन्द्रं नमाम्यहम् ॥

ఆర్తానామార్తిహన్తారం భీతానాం భయనాశనమ్ ।
ద్విషదాం కాలదండం తం రామచంద్రం నమామ్యహమ్ ।

To bring relief to the sufferer; to cheer the soul oppressed with fear; to chastise the sinner; these emphatically constitute Rama's essence: these entitle him to the lasting respect and homage of Creation: So Rama feels no hesitation whatever in choosing sides: he readily throws in his lot with Sugriva to whom his answer goes forth in these words:—

उपकारफलं मित्रं विदितं मे महाकपे ।
वालिनं तं वधिष्यामि तव भार्यापहारिणम् ॥

ఉపకారఫలం మిత్రం విదితం మే మహాకపే ॥
వాలినం తం వధిష్యామి తవ భార్యాపహారిణమ్ ।

(Bk. IV canto 5 Slokas 26—7)

"Great Vanar friends who seek my aid
Still find their trust with fruit repaid.

Vali, thy foe, who stole away
Thy wife, this vengeful hand shall slay."

Rama's instinct always gravitates towards the Normal as the needle unfailingly points to the North: He takes up the cause of truth against evil: of justice against pride and power: if thus he meets with Sugriva's wishes, it is because he deserves the favour and to Rama it is clear disinterested duty, duty to the public, duty to the country, duty to posterity. Far from selfishness, it is evident selflessness pure and simple. The fittest survives. Accordingly Vali's fourth count falls to the ground.

A superior soul, Rama lives for others **प्रजानां च हिते रत:** (ప్రజానాం చ హితే రతః. He takes interest in the good of the subject population. Their welfare is his delight: he is the Sovereign wherever he is, as said the Rishis:-

नगरस्थो वनस्थो वा त्वं नो राजा नरेश्वर ।
నగరస్థో వనస్థో వా త్వం నో రాజా నరేశ్వర ।

And, to indulge in virtue is his sole purpose:
धर्मसन्तानमिच्छन: । ధర్మసంతాన మిచ్ఛనః ।

It is not until the evil-doer is punished that the equillibrium of the society can be restored. As the foremost of the Kshatriya Race, Rama is ever ready to do his duty in this respect.

Vali's aberration from the right path unrepantant, works his own fall. Retribution overtakes this transgressor. Not that his skin, nor hair, nor flesh is worth anything: his defiance of the Law merits condign punishment. This comes from the genuine Royal hand that is entitled to the privilege of inflicting it. Rama cares not for Vali's wealth, power or influence. He looks to the eradication of evil and the restoration of the normal conditions. For Rama, not to take cognizance of Vali's crime is sure to prove an omission of duty; while suitable punishment would free Vali from his sin. Rama in his answer to Vali aptly quotes Manu's Text in support of this.

He says:—

राजभिर्धृतदण्डास्तु कृत्वा पापानि मानवाः ।
निर्मलाः स्वर्गमायान्ति सन्तस्सुकृतिनो यथा ॥

शासनाद्वा विमोक्षाद्वा स्तेनः स्तेयाद्विमुच्यते ।
राजा त्वशासन्पापस्य तदवाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

రాజభిర్ధృతదండాస్తు కృత్వా పాపాని మానవాః ।
నిర్మలాః స్వర్గమాయాన్తి సన్తస్సుకృతినో యథా ॥
శాసనాద్వా విమోక్షాద్వా స్తేనః స్తేయాద్విముచ్యతే ।
రాజా త్వశాసన్పాపస్య తదవాప్నోతి కిల్బిషమ్ ॥

"Pure grow the sinners kings chestise,
And, like the virtuous, gain the skies;
By pain or full atonement freed,
They reap the fruit of righteous deed,
While kings who punish not incur
The penalties of those who err."

(Bk. IV canto 18: Slokas 32—33.)

This answers Vali's third count.

Now what is Vali's sin: Sugriva and Vali are brothers: Vali is the elder: Sugriva duly honors him: Vali succeeds their father to the chiefship of the Vanars: Sugriva ever strengthens his hand in the Government of their kingdom. A fiend by name Mayavi, son of Dundubhi, for woman's sake, engages Vali in fight. Fraternal

affection and sense of duty make Ṣugriva follow his brother. Mayavi flies before Vali, enters a cave and disappears. Vali, determind to end the foe, leaves Sugriva to stay at the entrance and rushes into the cave to explore: one full year goes by and Vali does not turn up. Sugriva fears for Vali, thinks he must have lost his life and mourns. A strain of froth and blood issues from the cavern; the roar of demons is heard; yet no shout of his brother for his triumph. This totally discourages him and confirms his presentiment; so he closes the cave-orfice with a huge stone, performs funerals to the lost brother and retraces his heavy steps to Kishkindha. The nobles at the Court come to know of it. By universal consent, they place him on Vali's Throne: for a time he reigns in peace, dispenses justice and becomes popular. Vali returns triumphant, finds Sugriva in his place, takes offence and grows wild with rage and would not compose himself and take the right view of the situation. Now, strong as sugriva is with his rank and power supported by the Vanar lords, yet respect

for his elder brother restrains him and he readily throws himself at Vali's feet, speaks the truth and implores pardon.

He says to Vali:—

विषादात्त्विह मां दृष्ट्वा पौरैर्मन्त्रिभिरेव च ।
अभिषिक्तो न कामेन तन्मे त्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि ॥
त्वमेव राजा मानार्हः सदा चाहं यथापुरम् ।
राजभावे नियोगोऽयं मया त्वद्विरहात्कृतः ॥
सामात्यपौरनगरं स्थितं निहतकण्टकम् ।
न्यासभूतमिदं राज्यं तव निर्यातयाम्यहम् ॥
मा च रोषं कृथाः सौम्य मयि शत्रुनिबर्हण ।
याचे त्वां शिरसा राजन् मया बद्धोऽयमञ्जलिः ॥
बलादस्मि समागम्य मन्त्रिभिः पुरवासिभिः ।
राजभावे नियुक्तोऽहं शून्यदेशजिगीषया ॥

విషాదాత్త్విహ మాం దృష్ట్వా పౌరైర్మన్త్రిభిరేవ చ ।
అభిషిక్తో న కామేన తన్మే త్వం క్షన్తుమర్హసి ॥
త్వమేవ రాజా మానార్హః సదా చాహం యథాపురం ।
రాజభావే నియోగోఽయం మయా త్వద్విరహాత్కృతః ॥
సామాత్యపౌరనగరం స్థితం నిహతకణ్టకం ।
న్యాసభూతమిదం రాజ్యం తవ నిర్యాతయామ్యహమ్ ॥

మా చ రోషం కృథాః సౌమ్య మయి శత్రునిబర్హణ ।
యాచే త్వాం శిరసా రాజన్మయా బద్ధోఽయమంజలిః ॥
బలాదస్మి సమాగమ్య మన్త్రిభిః పురవాసిభిః ।
రాజభావే నియుక్తోఽహం శూన్యదేశజిగీషయా ॥

My deep distress and downcast mien
By citizen and lord were seen.
They made me king against my will:
Forgive me if the deed was ill.
True as I ever was I see
My honoured king once more in thee;
I only ruled a while the state
When thou hadst left us desolate.
This town with people, lords, and lands,
Lay as a trust in guardian hands;
And now, my gracious lord, accept
The kingdom which thy servant kept.
Forgive me, victor of the foe.
Nor let thy wrath against me glow.
See, joining suppliant hands I pray,
And at thy feet my head I lay.
Believe my words: against my will
The royal seat they made me fill.

Unkinged they saw the city, hence
They made me lord for her defence.

[Bk. IV canto X Slokas 6—11]

A frame of mind more just and a fraternal feeling more intense, it is not easy to conceive: Sugriva never harbours a single sinful thought; never swerves from the path of rectitude: is ever dutiful and loyal to his brother: makes clean breast of matters, but in vain.

अपि वाली मम क्रोधान्न प्रसादं चकार सः।

అపి వాలీ మమ క్రోధాన్న ప్రసాదం చకార సః ।

"Still Vali in his rage and pride
All signs of grace and love denied."

Truth unfortunately weighs but little with Vali. Fortune smites him with blindness: Sugriva's just words fall on deaf ears. Occupying the vantage ground he did, Vali was expected to be just, at least not rude to his own brother, beyond the bounds of tolerance. In the fancied security of his might he outrages his brother's feelings, an example as sad as bad. The beast in him predominates and he throws away a

splendid opportunity of welcoming to his great strength the proferred submission of his own brother, turns him out to exile, and, adding sin to sin, appropriates his spouse. Vali thus ill treats his brother without sufficient cause for it: he is vindictive, does not accept his brother's sincere apology and keeps his wife. These constitute Vali's sin.

Rama thus puts it to Vali:—

त्वं तु संक्लिष्टधर्मा च कर्मणा च विगर्हितः ।
कामतन्त्रप्रधानश्च न स्थितो राजवर्त्मनि ॥
ज्येष्ठो भ्राता पिता चैव यश्च विद्यां प्रयच्छति ।
त्रयस्ते पितरो ज्ञेयाः धर्मे पथि हि वर्तिनः ॥
यवीयानात्मनः पुत्रः शिष्यश्चापि गुणोदितः ।
पुत्रवत्ते त्रयश्चिन्त्याः धर्मश्चेदत्र कारणम् ॥
सूक्ष्मः परमदुर्ज्ञेयः सतां धर्मः प्लवङ्गम ।
हृदिस्थस्सर्वभूतानां आत्मा वेद शुभाशुभम् ॥
चपलश्चपलैस्सार्धं वानरैरकृतात्मभिः ।
जात्यन्ध इव जात्यन्धैः मन्त्रयन् द्रक्ष्यसे नु किम् ॥
अहं तु व्यक्ततामस्य वचनस्य ब्रवीमि ते ।
न हि मां केवलं रोषात् त्वं विगर्हितुमर्हसि ॥
तदेतत्कारणं पश्य यदर्थं त्वं मया हतः ।

भ्रातुर्वर्तसि भार्यायां त्यक्त्वा धर्मं सनातनम् ॥
अस्य त्वं धरमाणस्य सुग्रीवस्य महात्मनः ।
रुमायां वर्तसे कामात् स्नुषायां पापकर्मकृत् ॥
तद्व्यतीतस्य ते धर्मात् कामवृत्तस्य वानर ।
भ्रातृभार्याविमर्शेऽस्मिन् दण्डोऽयं प्रतिपादितः ॥
न हि धर्मविरुद्धस्य लोकवृत्तादपेयुषः ।
दण्डादन्यत्र पश्यामि निग्रहं हरियूथप ॥
न हि ते मर्षये पापं क्षत्रियोऽहं कुलोद्भवः ।
औरसीं भगिनीं वाऽपि भार्यां वाऽप्यनुजस्य यः ॥
प्रचरेत नरः कामात् तस्य दण्डो वधस्स्मृतः ।
भरतस्तु महीपालो वयं त्वादेशवर्तिनः ॥
त्वं तु धर्मादतिक्रान्तः कथं शक्य उपेक्षितुम् ।
गुरुर्धर्मव्यतिक्रांतं प्राज्ञो धर्मेण पालयन् ॥
भरतः कामवृत्तानां निग्रहे पर्यवस्थितः ।
वयं तु भरतादेशविधिं कृत्वा हरीश्वर ॥
त्वद्विधान्भिन्नमर्यादान् नियन्तुं पर्यवस्थिताः ।
త్వాం తు సంక్లిష్టధర్మాణం చ కర్మణా చ విగర్హితః ।
కామతన్త్రప్రధానశ్చ న స్థితో రాజవర్త్మని ॥
జ్యేష్ఠో భ్రాతా పితా చైవ యశ్చ విద్యాం ప్రయచ్ఛతి ।
త్రయస్తే పితరో జ్ఞేయాః ధర్మే పథి హి వర్తినః ॥

యవీయానాత్మనః పుత్రః శిష్యశ్చాపి గుణోదితః ।
పుత్రవత్తే త్రయశ్చిన్త్యాః ధర్మశ్చేదత్ర కారణమ్ ॥
సూక్ష్మః పరమదుర్జ్ఞేయః సతాం ధర్మః ప్లవఙ్గమ ।
హృదిస్థ స్సర్వభూతానాం ఆత్మా వేద శుభాశుభమ్ ॥
చపలశ్చపలై స్సార్ధం వానరై రకృతాత్మభిః ।
జాత్యన్ధ ఇవ జాత్యన్ధైః మన్త్రయన్ ద్రక్ష్యసే ను కిమ్ ॥
అహం తు వ్యక్తతామస్య వచనస్య బ్రవీమి తే ।
న హి మాం కేవలం రోషాత్ త్వం విగర్హితుమర్హసి ॥
తదేతత్కారణం పశ్య యదర్థం త్వం మయా హతః ।
భ్రాతుర్వర్తసి భార్యాయాం త్యక్త్వా ధర్మం సనాతనమ్ ॥
అస్య త్వం ధరమాణస్య సుగ్రీవస్య మహాత్మనః ।
రుమాయాం వర్తసే కామాత్ స్నుషాయాం పాపకర్మకృత్ ॥
తద్వ్యతీతస్య తే ధర్మాత్ కామవృత్తస్య వానర ।
భ్రాతృభార్యావమర్శేఽస్మిన్ దణ్డోఽయం ప్రతిపాదితః ॥
న హి ధర్మవిరుద్ధస్య లోకవృత్తాదపేయుషః ।
దణ్డాదన్యత్ర పశ్యామి నిగ్రహం హరియూథప ॥
న హి తే మర్షయే పాపం క్షత్రియోఽహం కులోద్భవః ।
ఔరసీం భగినీం వాఽపి భార్యాం వాఽప్యనుజస్య యః ॥

ప్రచరేత నరః కామాత్ తస్య దణ్డో వధస్స్మృతః ।
భరతస్తు మహీపాలో వయం త్వాదేశవర్తినః ॥
త్వం తు ధర్మాదతిక్రాన్తః కథం శక్య ఉపేక్షితుమ్ ।
గురుర్ధర్మవ్యతిక్రాన్తం ప్రాజ్ఞో ధర్మేణ పాలయన్ ॥
భరతః కామవృత్తానాం నిగ్రహే పర్యవస్థితః ।
వయం తు భరతాదేశవిధిం కృత్వా హరీశ్వర ॥
త్వద్విధాన్భిన్నమర్యాదాన్ నియన్తుం పర్యవస్థితాః ।

* * *

* * *

Thou from that path hast turned aside,
And virtue's holy law defied,
Left the fair path which kings should tread,
And followed pleasure's voice instead.
The man who cleaves to duty's law
Regards these three with filial awe--
The sire, the elder brother, third
Him from whose lips his lore he heard.
Thus too, for duty's sake, the wise
Regard with fond paternal eyes
The well-loved younger brother, one
Their lore has ripened, and a son.

Fine are the laws which guide the good,
Abstruse, and hardly understood;
Only the soul, enthroned within
The breast of each, knows right from sin.
But thou art wild and weak of soul,
And spurnest, like thy race, control;
The true and right thou canst not find,
The blind consulting with the blind.
Incline thine ear and I will teach
The cause that prompts my present speech.
This tempest of thy soul assuage,
Nor blame me in thine idle rage.
On this great sin thy thoughts bestow,
The sin for which I lay thee low.
Thou, Vali, in thy brother's life
Hast robbed him of his wedded wife,
And keepest, scorning ancient right,
His Ruma for thine own delight.
Thy son's own wife should scarcely be
More sacred in thine eyes than she.
All duty thou hast scorned, and hence
Comes punishment for dire offence.
For those who blindly do amiss

There is, I ween, no way but this:
To check the rash who dare to stray
From customs which the good obey.
I may not, sprung of Kshatriya line,
Forgive this heinous sin of thine;
The Laws for those who sin like thee
The penalty of death decree.
Now Bharath rules with sovereign sway,
And we his royal word obey.
There was no hope of pardon, none,
For the vile deed that thou hast done.
That wisest monarch dooms to die
The wretch whose crimes the law defy;
And we, chastising these who err,
His rightous doom administer.''

[Bk IV canto 18 Slokas 12—26]

Even now we have a section of men who consider it a sin to wed or take to bed a younger brother's wife and practically abhor it and treat her with daughterly regard. The punishment ordained for such sin is death. This is Manu's Law as obtained at the time. It has also since been the case more or less among chivalric

nations where the law partakes more of the martial than the civil aspect.

Rama covets no land, wealth or power. He can bestow these gifts on those that honestly seek after them. His duty is to afford protection to all, consistently with the demands of justice. No doubt he is now clad in saint's attire, leading the life of a recluse in the woods. Still he inherits Royal blood; the Kshatriya instinct is with him all the same. When Bharatha pays a visit to Rama on the Hill of Chithrakuta and implores him to return to Ayodhya and assume sovereignty, an animated discussion ensues. Rama is determined to do his parent's bidding: Bharatha protests but in vain: finally Bharatha accepts Rama's sandals and enthrones them and acts as mere Regent of Rama; and this on promise of Rama's return in due time. His power Rama uses never unprovoked, never uncalled for, but only when needed and then to the extent required and no more, no less: he has not foresworn the use of the Bow or the Astra, mechanical or magnitic and mesmeric weapons. On

the other hand, his advent into the forest of Dandaka, whatever the cause, is hailed by the saints inhabiting it. They look upon him as the Deliverer. He is the Sovereign. They throw themselves under his wing against the malignant influence of Rakshasas, demons and giants who infest the woods, disturb their harmless rites and even feast on their flesh and blood. Events happen which challenge Rama: he takes up arms and single-handed slays 14,000 of the strongest giant army with their leader the valiant Khara included. This brings peace to that extensive primeval forest. Rama unostentatiously considers himself to be Bharatha's emissary to see that Law and order are properly maintained on Earth which is fief to the Royal Race of Ikshwaku whose lineage leads back direct to Manu the Law-giver: so it is fully within his jurisdiction to take cognizance of Vali's crime in the interests of public weal for which his life as a Kshatriya of the purest blood stands pledged. His foul deed has made Vali a public enemy. The plea of innocence urged by Vali is thus a

myth. It is hardly justifiable. High birth, superior position, power and influence always bring with them commensurate increase of responsibility. These Vali has abused; his sin condemns him to death under the Law. Hence the punishment that overtakes him.

We are now led to a consideration of the *modus operandi* Rama adopts to slay Vali. The commentary on the Ramayana entitled Tatwa Dipika, ascribed to one known as Maheswara Thirtha, explains the whole of the speech of Vali in the light of Praise to Rama. Vali is struck with Rama's resplendent glory as soon as he comes in sight of him and gives expression to his repentance and hails him as the Deliverer. This learned commentator makes out that Vali's speech, though to all appearance harsh and impeaching, is when analysed penitent and pregnant with Vali's devotion to Rama in whom he recognises the Supreme Being, Iswara, the punisher of the wicked and the protector of the good. Vali says to Rama "I have been immersed in things worldly: given up to the sway of

passions: you have killed the beast in me: you have reaped a harvest of fame that is indescribable." The commentary is excellent. It takes the esoteric view.

Let us now consider the historic aspect of the story. Rama himself lays no pretensions to anything supernatural: his power is indeed great; and as great his modesty. When he slays Ravana and frees the world from the reign of Tyranny and Terror, Brahma, Lord of the worlds, congratulates him; in the course of his reply Rama says:—

आत्मानं मानुषं मन्ये रामं दशरथात्मजम् ।

ఆత్మానం మానుషం మన్యే రామం దశరథాత్మజమ్।

"I deem myself a mortal man
Of old Ikshwaku's line I spring
From Dasaratha Kosal's King."

The challenge to Vali appropriately goes from Sugriva who is the injured party. This is nothing but proper. There is obsolutely no reason for any one else to offer the challenge. Nor need Vali deem it incumbent on him to take notice of challenge from any other source in this

instance. The moment he hears Sugriva's call he steps out to give him battle.

Now Rama who espouses Sugriva's cause has to punish Vali. To face Vali or not is the question. Rama is well versed in the arts of war. The principles of the Martial order and Chivalry he duly respects and can allow none to violate. He who is master of the situation, he whose might founded in virtue the celestials revere, might to which the bow of Siva and the bow of Vishnu alike bear ample testimony, is surely far from cherishing any apprehension to face Vali: on the other hand, for such a hero to set the machinery of war in motion against the sinner, Vali, or to judge him by principles which should apply to kings who respect Law and manifest interest in the weal of their subjects, might indeed look mockery. Did Vali acquit himself as became his position and dignity, were he free from the taint of the vile guilt, the unpardonable sin that haunted him, in no way alleviated by any tendency to repentance when time was given him, he might perhaps have deserved or expected some better treatment. This certainly was not so.

Vali is a condemned criminal, a public offender, an outlaw; Kabandha has borne independent testimony to it before. No Law known to any Nation, ancient or modern with any pretension to civilization more or less developed, makes it incumbent on anybody to treat a criminal as a foeman worthy of his steel in fight on equal terms. In no age or clime is ever an offender convicted of a heinous crime allowed the privileges of a citizen. An outlaw is held everywhere to forfeit all claim to consideration. The sentence passed on him according to the Law of the age is left to be put into execution as might seem most desirable and convenient under the circumstances of the case.

Vali is the head of a fierce breed of apish creatures resembling man with the propensities of the brute uppermost in him: he is found guilty of an offence which condemns him to capital punishment and hardly entitles him to the privileges of the Martial order or Chivalry. His existence may be put an end to as can be most conveniently done. In our own times do we not see the sentence of death passed on a

criminal held amenable to it handed over to be dealt with quite otherwise than with respectable formalities?

Should however Rama face Vali, What would Vali do: he should either (1). fight, or (2) run away, or (3) offer his apology: fight, flight or submission, these are the alternatives.

To take the first alternative. It is said that Vali had a boon which enabled him to secure to himself half the strength of any that opposed him. In support of this saying, a commentary on the Ramayana quotes the following sloka:-

आहूय वालिनं ब्रह्मा ददौ वरमनुत्तमम् ।
प्रतीपवर्तिनो भूयादर्धं बलमरिंदम ॥

ఆహూయ వాలినం బ్రహ్మా దదౌ వరమనుత్తమమ్ ।
ప్రతీపవర్తినో భూయాదర్ధం బలమరిందమ ॥

A work known as Tatwa Sangraha Ramayana, the production of one Ramabramhananda Saraswathi Swami says that Vali happened to be present when the churning of the sea of Milk by the Devas and the Asuras, the celestials and the fiends, took place, and having lent his aid to the

former received this boon which is there expressed as coming to him not from Bramha but from Vishnu, the word "Vishnu" appearing in his text in the above quoted Sloka in place of 'Bramha'. The Swami, whose remarks on the subject are recorded in the shape of a dialogue between Shiva and Parwathi, makes it out that Rama as the God Vishnu in human form had to honor what he had said himself to Vali before and so for the sake of consistency he killed Vali without appearing before him. This on the very face of it is a strained argument and in spite of all that might be said for it seems far-fetched. Were it true, Rama would not have missed to hint about it: as a matter of fact he makes no mention of such a hypothesis direct or indirect in his answer to Vali. No necessity for any such boon is however made out. Did any such exist, the author of Rama's doings, a sage of clear vision rendered pure by austereties, would be the last to pass it over. Valmiki who speaks of events as they occur nowhere makes any allusion to it direct or indirect. Vali himself

makes no mention of it anywhere. Again it is to Sugriva's interest to put Rama in possession of all information touching Vali; he tells Rama of Vali's might and power, speaks of his speed and strength and leaves nothing unsaid about him. Were this boon true, he should necessarilly have given it prominence or at least have referred to it in his tale; as a matter of fact Sugriva does not say anything of it. Not even Hanuman, reliable, clear of intellect and of perfect memory, ever gives a hint about it: such a circumstance, were it ever true, was too significant to escape notice in such a momentous affair. Again, were it true, Tara, Vali's Queen, would not have been as anxious as she actually was when Vali sallied out a second time against Sugriva to meet his fate. She feels deeply concerned about Vali, so much so that she tells him in terms clear, sympathetic and unequivocal that he could in vain hope to succeed against Rama whose virtuous might she recognises, and warns that Rama has undertaken to help Sugriva at the time and Rama is invincible. Here is what she says:—

रामः परबलामर्दी युगान्ताग्निरिवोत्थितः ।
निवासवृक्षस्साधूनामापन्नानां परा गतिः ॥
आर्तानां संश्रयश्चैव यशसश्चैकभाजनम् ।
ज्ञानविज्ञानसंपन्नो निदेशे निरतः पितुः ॥
धातूनामिव शैलेन्द्रो गुणानामाकरो महान् ।
तत् क्षमं न विरोधस्ते सह तेन महात्मना ॥
दुर्जयेनाप्रमेयेन रामेण रणकर्मसु ।
शूर वक्ष्यामि ते किंचिन्न चेच्छाम्यभ्यसूयितुम् ॥
श्रूयतां क्रियतां चैव तव वक्ष्यामि यद्धितम् ।
यौवराज्येन सुग्रीवं तूर्णं साध्वभिषेचय ॥
विग्रहं माकृथा वीर भ्रात्रा राजन्बलीयसा
अहं हि ते क्षमं मन्ये तेन रामेण सौहृदं ॥
सुग्रीवेण च संप्रीतिं वैरमुत्सृज्य दूरतः ।

రామః పరబలామర్దీ యుగాన్తాగ్నిరివోత్థితః ।
నివాసవృక్షస్సాధూనామాపన్నానాం పరా గతిః ॥
ఆర్తానాం సంశ్రయశ్చైవ యశసశ్చైకభాజనమ్ ।
జ్ఞానవిజ్ఞానసంపన్నో నిదేశే నిరతః పితుః ॥
ధాతూనామివ శైలేన్ద్రో గుణానామాకరో మహాన్ ।
తత్క్షమం న విరోధస్తే సహ తేన మహాత్మనా ॥
దుర్జయేనాప్రమేయేన రామేణ రణకర్మసు ।

శృణు వక్ష్యామి తే కించిన్న చేచ్ఛస్యభ్యసూయితుమ్ ।
శ్రూయతాం క్రియతాం చైవ తవ వక్ష్యామి యద్ధితమ్ ।
యౌవరాజ్యేన సుగ్రీవం తూర్ణం సాధ్వభిషేచయ ॥
విగ్రహం మాకృథా వీర భ్రాత్రా రాజన్బలీయసా ।
అహం హి తే క్షమం మన్యే తేన రామేణ సౌహృదమ్ ॥
సుగ్రీవేణ చ సంప్రీతిం వైరముత్సృజ్య దూరతః ।

"Now Rama famed for exploit high,
Is bound thy brother's firm ally.
Like fires of doom that ruin all
He makes each foe before him fall.
He is the suppliant's sure defence,
The tree that shelters innocence.
The poor and wretched seek his feet;
In him the noblest glories meet.
With skill and knowledge vast and deep
His sire's commands he loved to keep.;
With princely gifts and graces stored
As metals deck the Mountains' Lord.
Thou canst not, O, my hero, stand
Before the might of Rama's hand;
For none may match his power, or dare
With him in deeds of war compare.

Hear, I entreat, the words I say,
Nor lightly turn my rede away.
O let fraternal discord cease,
And link you in the bonds of peace-
Let consecrating rites ordain
Sugriva partner of thy reign.
Let war and thoughts of conflict end,
And be thou his and Rama's friend.''

[Bk. IV canto 15 Slokas 19—25]

Thus Tara's language of anxiety and concern gives the final lie to a boon such as that ascribed to Vali. No boon of the kind seems to exist, save in imagination rather inconceivable. On the other hand, Rama's Power is undoubtedly peerless: and as mentioned already one of the Astras he was initiated into by the Sage Viswamithra was such as to enable him to draw to himself the power of others. If Vali stood forward to oppose Rama, the solution were simple: one shaft from Rama's bow would suffice to put an end to his life. But was he certain tofight? No, none could guarantee it. Will he not submit?

The next alternative is flight: Rama is there in the field to punish Vali. The moment Rama

meets Vali, his arrow will fly at him unless he submits; and Rama's arrow never fails of its purpose; it is sure to discharge its function obedient to its lord's behest, unless he should recall it as once before he did in the case Kakasura, the crow-shaped fiend in the Mandakini Forest, against whom he aimed his shaft for his mischeivous intentions but on whose submission he recalled it and saved his life. As to Vali, the case is different. Pardon here is out of the question. Rama's arrow once aimed at him should put an end to his existence: his flight before it would be absolutely in vain: no region in the World, nor Earth, nor Heaven, nor the Elements, nor the celestials can give him any shelter against Rama's shaft. There is here again the contengency that Vali sighting Rama might surrender and apologise.

The third and the last alternative viz., that of submission now remains to be dealt with. None evidently is more interested in Vali than Tara, his own Queen. He has true regard for her. Her words of wise counsel are still ringing

in his ears: she clearly said he could in vain hope to succeed against Rama; none could match Rama in deeds of war and return alive; Rama in whom "The noblest glories meet" is the main stay, the sheet-anchor of the suppliant and the innocent; so, all discord must here cease; thoughts of conflict should end; brotherly feeling must re-assert itself and he should become Rama's friend: she concludes:—

प्रसीद पथ्यं शृणु जल्पितं हि मे ।
न रोषमेवानुविधातुमर्हसि ॥
क्षमो हि ते कोसलराजसूनुना ।
न विग्रहश्शक्रसमानतेजसा ॥

ప్రసీద పథ్యం శృణు జల్పితం హి మే ।
న రోషమేవానువిధాతు మర్హసి ॥
క్షమో హి తే కోసలరాజసూనునా ।
న విగ్రహ శ్శక్రసమాన తేజసా ॥

[Bk. IV. canto 15. sloka 30]

"Assuage thy fruitless wrath, and shun
The mighter arms of Raghu's son;
For, Indra's peer in might is he,
A foe too strong, my lord, for thee."

Tara's concern in Vali's weal makes her say these words: nor does she in any way shoot wide of the mark in this respect. Who does not love Rama the true friend and well-wisher of the world? Says sage Vasishta:—

लोके हि स न विद्येत यो न राममनुव्रतः ।
లోకే హి స న విద్యేత యో న రామమనువ్రతః ।

"In all the world none draws his breath
Who loves not Rama, true to death."

Rama's glances are highly magnetic: who can turn his eye or thought away from him? so powerful, so attractive is his strong personality with the halo of virtue encircling him. This is too much for a sinner to face and yet persist in sin. Who can look at Rama and still feel uninfluenced by him to be cured of his evil ways and led into the path of rectitude? Here is sage Valmiki's language:—

यश्च रामं न पश्येत्तु यं च रामो न पश्यति ।
निन्दितस्स वसेल्लोके स्वात्माऽप्येनं विगर्हते ॥
सर्वेषां हि स धर्मात्मा वर्णानां कुरुते दयाम् ।
యశ్చ రామం న పశ్యేత్తు యం చ రామో న పశ్యతి ।

నిన్దితస్స వసేల్లోకే స్వాత్మాఽప్యేనం విగర్హతే ॥
సర్వేషాం హి స ధర్మాత్మా వర్ణానాం కురుతే దయామ్ ।

[Bk. II canto 17 Slokes 13—14]

"He who sees not Rama near, nor catches a look from his eye, becomes a butt for scorn and general blame: his very conscience reproaches him in bitter shame. Rama's love extends to all Varnas, castes and creeds and classes."

Rama is broad-minded: his sympathy for Creation is deep: his purpose while shielding Sugriva is directed quite as much to save Vali; now the lines on which these two brothers have walked are different: their methods to salvation must necessarily, consequentially, be different. Rama adopts courses respectively suitable to them. Sugriva manifested brotherly feeling to Vali: it was not reciprocated; and he was banished. Adversity has nursed him on her lap and he has learnt a useful lesson: on the other hand, Vali is blinded by prosperity. He is now a pride-fed soul: he has shown no signs of repentance, none whatever of remorse: his conduct

has been outrageous: dare he look on Rama and still feel unmoved? This is altogether impossible. Rama's very sight should overpower him: he should inevitably, with a revulsion of thought, feel drawn forth to throw himself at Rama's feet and pray for pardon. Sri Govindaraja the famous Visishtadwaitha Commentator on the Ramayana says:—

यदि रामो वालिनः पुरतस्तिष्ठेत्तदा विदिततदीय प्रभावतया वाली प्रह्वो भवेत्.

యది రామో వాలినః పురతస్తిష్ఠేత్తదా విదిత తదీయప్రభావతయా వాలీ ప్రహ్వో భవేత్.

He means that, sighting Rama, Vali should, realizing Rama's resplendence, tender his submission.

Again, Sriman Madhwacharya the distinguished founder of the dwaitha school of philosophy is quite clear on this point: he puts it in his Maha Bharatha Tatparya Nirnaya in the following words:—

भक्त्या ममैष यदि मामभिपश्यतीह ।
पादौ ध्रुवं मम समेष्यति निर्विचारः ॥

योग्यो वधो न हि जनस्य पदानतस्य ।
राज्यार्थिना रविसुतेन वधोऽर्थितस्य ॥

భక్తో మమైష యది మామభిపశ్యతీహ ।
పాదౌ ధ్రువం మమ సమేష్యతి నిర్విచారః ॥
యోగ్యో వధో న హి జనస్య పదానతస్య
రాజ్యార్థినా రవిసుతేన వధోఽర్థితస్య ॥

This Religious philosopher is here positively certain that the moment he looks at Sri Rama, Vali would fall at and embrace his feet. Vali's submission would quite change the aspect of affairs and place Rama in a very delicate predicament. Vali is the arch sinner. Yet whatever his sin, once he tenders submission and apologises, Rama can never make up his mind to harm him; on the other hand he should take him under his wing. This is a settled fact. Sacred is Rama's motto of protection to self-surrender. Mark what Rama says when Vibhishana, Ravana's own brother goes forth and seeks Rama's protection:— Bk. VI canto (18)

मित्रभावेन संप्राप्तं न त्यजेयं कथंचन ।
दोषो यद्यपि तस्य स्यात्सतामेतदगर्हितम् ॥

....

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम ॥

మిత్రభావేన సమ్ప్రాప్తం న త్యజేయం కథంచన ।
దోషో యద్యపి తస్య స్యాత్సతామేతదగర్హితమ్ ॥ (2)

....

సకృదేవ ప్రపన్నాయ తవాస్మీతి చ యాచతే ।
అభయం సర్వభూతేభ్యో దదామ్యేతద్వ్రతం మమ ॥ (33-34)

"The suppliant will I never forsake,
Nor my protecting aid refuse
When one in name of friendship sues;
Though faults and folly blot his fame,
Pity and help he still may claim.

* * *

Bound by a solemn vow I sware
That all my saving help should share
Who sought me in distress and cried,
Thou art my hope and none beside."

It is verily Rama's privilege to forgive. Mercy, which, as the poet so well puts it, is "Twice blessed," which is above the "Sceptered Sway," that "Attribute to Awe and Majesty,"

is eminently Rama's possession. He would have to extend this concession to Vali if opportunity were given him to tender his submission. Now this should at all events be avoided. To go and offer deliberately such a chance to a criminal would be folly in the extreme. If anything, Rama should give no occasion whatever to this contingency in the present instance. His word stands pledged already to Sugriva. Nor is it an ill-considered or hasty promise. Sugriva has learnt the wholesome lesson of life; his adversity has proved a sufficient test to him: he would be useful to society: he deserves to survive. Vali should be laid low. Vali can no longer be suffered to walk the earth. His is not a pardonable sin, certainly not a compoundable one in the interests of public weal. Rama is under no obligation to face Vali. An offender is told and punished, or in some cases punished and told of his crime. The former course gives the offender a chance of appeal for pardon, and if such an appeal, as is sure to be preferred in cases of capital punishment, is made, it rests with the

sovereign authority in the land grant it or refuse. It is invariably rejected as a compliance with it would create inconvenient precedent and interfere with the usual course of the law. In the case of Rama, however, an appeal to mercy is imperative: one which he can never, in the plentitude of his grace, deny. So, as Vali deserves the penalty of Law for his sin, it is not safe to give him any the least opportunity for pardon. Hence necessarily, in the interests of Law, Vali is first punished and then told what his guilt is and how serious and dangerous to the well-being of society.

Thus, of the three alternatives just reviewed, fight is doubtful; likewise flight is eqally doubtful; while neither is independent of a chance of the third, viz. submission which is the alternative most likely under the circumstances: sighting Rama, none can fail to be drawn to that towering, pure-souled personality: pardon duly implored of Rama is pardon gained: no doubt of this: and this would here mean quite a reversal of the normal conditions. It requires to

be avoided: no opportunity for it can be given consistently with the Law.

Vali has misbehaved. The misbehaviour amounts to a sin: the sin is quite unpardonable. Nothing short of capital punishment can expiate it. He is the head of the Vanar clans. This position of his aggravates the offence. He has shown no sign of repentance. This intensifies it; his example is totally unbecoming; his pride of strength bids farewell to virtue and hitherto defies punishment. He thus forfeits all claim to treatment as a warrior and ruler and reduces himself to be classed as a criminal, rather the worst of this class with abused position and mis-applied trust haunting him to the grave: he has not justified his existence. To give him any the least chance of escape or surrender, would be the height of folly. It would mean perpetuation of the very evil sought to be eradicated. And not to mete out punishment to such a daring offender would reflect discredit on such a noble-blooded Kshatria like Rama, whose mission it is to punish sinners and establish the reign of righte-

ousness on earth. Meet punishment then should overtake the sinner giving him no room for flight and no chance for submission: he is an apish creature by birth: he possesses intellectuality no doubt, but this has been abused and misdirected: the beast in him predominates trampling down all sense of right conduct and the dictates of conscience: and he renders himself amenable to the chastisement due to a wild, cruel, fitful beast, impatient of control, haughty and self-sufficient. The behaviour of such a soul cannot in any way be dissimilar to that of the wild creature of the forest: and with regard to such the Game Law is quite in its right sphere for action and is in perfect accord with nature on all hands. Accordingly, due punishment now overtakes Vali and comes from the Royal scion privileged to inflict it in the manner he does with the right of sway over creation to help forward evolution. To face the sinner is uncalled for, also unwise and undesirable. The punishment for his sin is death. This can be dealt to him in any way: yet even here Rama choses to follow the Law. He acts

on lines of least friction and takes a course which, unobjectionable in itself and justifiable to him as the Sovereign, meets all requirements. As a hunter he aims at the criminal and his shaft throws Vali down.

Here is what Rama says to Vali in this respect.

श्रृणु चाप्यपरं भूयः कारणं हरिपुङ्गव ।
यच्छ्रुत्वा हेतुमद्वीर न मन्युं कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
न मे तत्र मनस्तापो न मन्युर्हरियूथप ।
वागुराभिश्च पाशैश्च कूटैश्च विविधैर्नराः ॥
प्रतिच्छन्नाश्च दृश्याश्च गृह्णन्ति सुबहून्मृगान् ।
प्रधावितान्वा वित्रस्तान्विस्रब्धांश्चापि निष्ठितान् ॥
प्रमत्तानप्रमत्तान्वा नरा मांसार्थिनो भृशम् ।
विध्यन्ति विमुखांश्चापि न च दोषोऽत्र विद्यते ॥
यान्ति राजर्षयश्चात्र मृगयां धर्मकोविदाः ।
तस्मात्त्वं निहतो युद्धे मया बाणेन वानर ॥
अयुध्यन्प्रतियुध्यन्वा यस्माच्छाखामृगो ह्यसि ।
दुर्लभस्य च धर्मस्य जीवितस्य शुभस्य च ॥
राजानो वानरश्रेष्ठ प्रदातारो न संशयः ।
तान्न हिंस्यान्न चाक्रोशेन्नाक्षिपेन्नाप्रियं वदेत् ॥
देवा मनुष्यरूपेण चरन्त्येते महीतले ।

त्वं तु धर्ममविज्ञाय केवलं रोषमास्थितः ॥
प्रदूषयासि मां धर्मे पितृपैतामहे स्थितम् ।

శృణు చాప్యపరం భూయః కారణం హరిపుఙ్గవ ।
యచ్ఛ్రుత్వా హేతుమద్వీర న మన్యుం కర్తుమర్హసి
న మే తత్ర మనస్తాపో న మన్యుర్హరియూథప ।
వాగురాభిశ్చ పాశైశ్చ కూటైశ్చ వివిధైర్నరాః ॥
ప్రతిచ్ఛన్నాశ్చ దృశ్యాశ్చ గృహ్ణన్తి సుబహూన్మృగాన్ ।
ప్రధావితాన్వా విత్రస్తాన్విస్రబ్ధాంశ్చాపి నిష్ఠితాన్ ॥
ప్రమత్తానప్రమత్తాన్వా నరా మాంసార్థినో భృశమ్ ।
విధ్యన్తి విముఖాంశ్చాపి నచ దోషోఽత్ర విద్యతే ॥
యాన్తి రాజర్షయశ్చాత్ర మృగయాం ధర్మకోవిదాః ।
తస్మాత్త్వం నిహతో యుద్ధే మయా బాణేన వానర ॥
అయుధ్యన్ప్రతియుధ్యన్వా యస్మాచ్ఛాఖామృగో హ్యసి ।
దుర్లభస్య చ ధర్మస్య జీవితస్య శుభస్య చ ।
రాజానో వానరశ్రేష్ఠ ప్రదాతారో న సంశయః ॥
తాన్న హింస్యాన్న చాక్రోశేన్నాక్షిపేన్నాప్రియం వదేత్ ।
దేవా మనుష్యరూపేణ చరన్త్యేతే మహీతలే ॥
త్వం తు ధర్మమవిజ్ఞాయ కేవలం రోషమాస్థితః ।
ప్రదూషయసి మాం ధర్మే పితృపైతామహే స్థితమ్ ।

"Once more, O Vali, lend thine ear
Another weightiest plea to hear,
For this, when heard and pondered well,
Will all complaint and rage dispel.
My soul will ne'er this deed repent,
Nor was my shaft in anger sent.
We take the silvan tribes beset
With snare and trap and gin and net,
And many a heedless deer we smite
From thickest shade, concealed from sight.
Wild for the slaughter of the game,
At stately stages our shafts we aim.
We strike them bounding scared away,
We strike them as they stand at bay,
When careless in the shade they lie,
Or scan the plain with watchful eye.
They turn away their heads: we aim,
And none the eager hunter blame.
Each royal saint, well trained in Law
Of duty, loves his bow to draw
And strike the quarry, e'en as thou
Hast fallen by mine arrow now,
Fighting with him or unaware,-

A Vanar thou,–I little care.
But yet, O best of Vanars, know
That kings who rule the earth bestow
Fruit of pure life and virtuous deed,
And lofty duty's hard-won meed.
Harm not thy lord the king: abstain
From act and word that cause him pain;
For kings are children of the skies
Who walk this earth in men's disguise.
But thou, in duty's claims untaught,
Thy breast with blinding passion fraught,
Assailest me who still have clung
To duty, with thy bitter tongue."

[Bk. IV. canto 18. Slokas 37-45]

The result is that Vali admits the sovereign claims of Law, realizes that Rama is faultless and apologises to Rama for his harsh words, saying:—

यत्त्वमात्थ नरश्रेष्ठ तदेवं नात्र संशयः ।
प्रतिवक्तुं प्रकृष्टे हि नापकृष्टस्तु शक्नुयात् ॥
तदयुक्तं मया पूर्वं प्रमादादुक्तमप्रियम् ।
तत्रापि खलु मे दोषं कर्तुं नार्हसि राघव ॥

त्वं हि दृष्टार्थतत्त्वज्ञः प्रजानां च हिते रतः ।
कार्यकारणसिद्धौ ते प्रसन्ना बुद्धिरव्यया ॥
मामप्यगतधर्माणं व्यतिक्रान्तपुरस्कृतम् ।
धर्मसंहितया वाचा धर्मज्ञ परिपालय ॥

యత్త్వమాత్థ నరశ్రేష్ఠ తదేవం నాత్ర సంశయః ।
ప్రతివక్తుం ప్రకృష్టే హి నాపకృష్టస్తు శక్నుయాత్ ॥
తదయుక్తం మయా పూర్వం ప్రమాదాదుక్తమప్రియమ్ ।
తత్రాపి ఖలు మే దోషం కర్తుం నార్హసి రాఘవ ॥
త్వం హి దృష్టార్థతత్త్వజ్ఞః ప్రజానాం చ హితే రతః ।
కార్యకారణసిద్ధౌ తే ప్రసన్నా బుద్ధిరవ్యయా ॥
మామప్యగతధర్మాణం వ్యతిక్రాన్తపురస్కృతమ్ ।
ధర్మసంహితయా వాచా ధర్మజ్ఞ పరిపాలయ ॥

[Bk. IV. canto 18 slokas 47—50]

"True, best of men, is every word
That from thy lips these ears have heard.
It ill beseems a wretch like me
To bandy empty words with thee.
Forgive the angry taunts that broke
From my wild bosom as I spoke,
And lay not to my charge, O king,

My mad reproaches' idle sting.
Thou, in the truth by trial trained,
Best knowledge of the right hast gained;
And layest, just and pure within,
The meetest penalty on sin,
Through every bond of law I burst,
The boldest sinner and the worst.
O let thy right-instructing speech
Console my heart and wisely teach."

Truth out at last: Vali's admission now involves sincere repentance: it saves him.

Vali then makes a request to Rama to take his son Angada under his protection. This Rama graciously grants. Vali next congratulates Sugriva, gives him his golden pendant and tells Angada to follow Sugriva's advice and expires. Sugriva is enthroned as king of the Vanars and Angada is made the Yuvaraj to the great joy of Tara and the Vanar hosts who all applaud Rama with one voice.

Thus closes this Episode which is as interesting as instructive. Rama aims at virtue, not mere fame: questionable methods however

tempting never recommend themselves to him. His Dharma as Kshatria to protect, to guard, to punish, is ever in his view; he never loses sight of it. As soon as he enters the Forest of Dandaka, the sages inhabiting it meet him and seek his help as against Rakshasas infesting that region, pointing out the mangled corpses of Saints put to death by these ruthless creatures. He promises them protection and every creature of the demoniac race as he comes in offensive contact with Rama falls by his hand. His whole life is an example of noble self-sacrifice. In the course of his search for Sitha, his queen, carried away by Ravana the over-lord of Rakshasas, Rama comes to know of Sugriva and his reverses. Here is for him a case to set right. Here is incentive to Chivalry proper. Here is a call to duty to him as a Kshatria to punish the sinner. How far this helps him to secure Sitha is a matter which is only subordinate to the main principle of the duty it involves, viz., to shield the sufferer and chastise the aggressor. As a true representative of Blood-Royal, his strength

is to be the means of protection to the weak and terror to the oppressor. Rama's is an example of true Dharma, not conventional, not compromising. It is not what holds good under certain conditions only, but what is true at all times. It concerns not some only but all Creation. He manfully takes up the cause of the penitent forlorn and chastises the wrong-doer.

Under conditions the most delicate and difficult, Rama acts with perfect self-control and walks on the path of rectitude without aberrating one way or the other.

"His steps in virtue's path are bent,
Obedient, pure and eloquent.
In each emprise he wins success,
And dying foes his power confess."

There is nothing in Rama's doings that furnishes pabulum for adverse criticism. His mighty foe Ravana himself sees nothing to find fault with in the character of Rama, in regard to this very incident of Vali, his own friend, or in any other respect. The purest and noblest Kshatria, Rama unites to his Martial tendencies

and Military genius, the sympathetic training he received from the best of Sages, Vasishta and Viswamithra. In him meet in harmonious proportion the qualities of the Brahmin and the Kshatria, a wholesome combination of the Satwik and the Rajasik elements. Born in purple yet simple and unostentatious in his life and habits, mighty beyond compare yet full of sympathy and compassion, the true friend of Creation yet the terror of evil, Rama is unparalleled as a hero: he is never rash and precipitate but ever wise and considerate. This his words and deeds themselves prove: his plans are thought out and worked with a high sense of duty and morality: his ways and means are above suspicion. His will proceeds on normal lines and follows the path of Rectitude; his word is but an index of it; and his work is the right resultant of these: his heart is tender and responsive to woe: he delights in Creations' weal: at the same time he regards his duty's claims as imperative. His is the mission to up-root evil and restore order, to substitute the rule of Law for

the reign of Tyranny. This he does at a self-sacrifice which is exemplary. His love is love not to this class or that alone, nor to relatives and friends only but equally to the whole Creation. The Dharma he restores endures for ages: his fame is endless: it pervades the worlds.

Says sage Vasishtha:—

न हि तद्भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो न भूपतिः ।
तद्वनं भविता राष्ट्रं यत्र रामो निवत्स्यति ॥

న హి తద్భవితా రాష్ట్రం యత్ర రామో న భూపతిః ।
తద్వనం భవితా రాష్ట్రం యత్ర రామో నివత్స్యతి ॥

"The land which Rama reigns not o'er,
Shall bear the kingdom's name no more.
The woods which Rama wanders through,
Shall be our home and kingdom too."

And the voice of mothers and sisters echoes and says:—

आपगाः कृतपुण्यास्ताः पद्मिन्यश्च सरांसि च ।
येषु स्नास्यति काकुत्स्थो विगाह्य सलिलं शुचि ॥
शोभयिष्यन्ति काकुत्स्थमटव्यो रम्यकाननाः ।
आपगाश्च महानूपास्सानुमन्तश्च पर्वताः ॥
काननं वाऽपि शैलं वा यं रामोऽभिगमिष्यति ।

प्रियातिथिमिव प्राप्तं नैनं शक्ष्यन्त्यनर्चितुम् ॥
विचित्रकुसुमापीडा बहुमञ्जरिधारिणः ।
राघवं दर्शयिष्यन्ति नगा भ्रमरशालिनः ॥
अकाले चापि मुख्यानि पुष्पाणि च फलानि च ।
दर्शयिष्यन्त्यनुक्रोशाद्गिरयो राममागतम् ॥
प्रस्नविष्यन्ति तोयानि विमलानि महीधराः ।
विदर्शयन्तो विविधान्भूयश्चित्रांश्च निर्झरान् ॥
पादपाः पर्वताग्रेषु रमयिष्यन्ति राघवम् ।
यत्र रामो भयं नात्र नास्ति तत्र पराभवः ॥

ఆపగాః కృతపుణ్యాస్తాః పద్మిన్యశ్చ సరాంసి చ ।
యేషు స్నాస్యతి కాకుత్స్థో విగాహ్య సలిలం శుచి ॥
శోభయిష్యన్తి కాకుత్స్థమటవ్యో రమ్యకాననాః ॥
ఆపగాశ్చ మహానూపాః సానుమన్తశ్చ పర్వతాః ।
కాననం వాఽపి శైలం వా యం రామోఽభిగమిష్యతి
ప్రియాతిథిమివ ప్రాప్తం నైనం శక్ష్యన్త్యనర్చితుమ్ ।
విచిత్రకుసుమాపీడా బహుమఞ్జరిధారిణః ।
రాఘవం దర్శయిష్యన్తి నగా భ్రమరశాలినః ॥
అకాలే చాపి ముఖ్యాని పుష్పాణి చ ఫలాని చ ।
దర్శయిష్యన్త్యనుక్రోశాద్గిరయో రామమాగతమ్ ॥
ప్రస్రవిష్యన్తి తోయాని విమలాని మహీధరాః ।

విదర్శయన్తో వివిధాన్భూయశ్చిత్రాంశ్చ విష్ఠరాన్ ।
సానసాః పవనతాగ్రేషు రమయిష్యన్తి రాఘవమ్ ।
యత్ర రామో భయం నాత్ర నాస్తి తత్ర పరాభవః

[Bk. II. Canto 48. Slokas 9—15]

"Made holy for all time we deem
Each pool and fountain, lake and stream,
If great Kakutstha's son shall choose
Their water for his bath to use.
Each forest, dark with lovely trees,
Shall yearn Kakutstha's son to please;
Each mountain peak and woody hill,
Each mighty flood and mazy rill,
Each rocky height, each shady grove
Where the blest feet of Rama rove,
Shall gladly welcome with the best
Of all they have their honoured guest.
The trees that clustering blossoms bear,
And bright-hued buds to gem their hair,
The heart of Rama shall delight,
And cheer him on the breezy height.
For him the upland slopes will show
The fairest roots and fruit that grow,

And all their wealth before him fling
Ere the due hour of ripening.
For him each earth-upholding hill
Its crystal water shall distil,
And all its floods shall be displayed
In many a thousand-hued cascade.
Where Rama stands is naught to fear,
No danger comes if he be near;
For all who live on him depend,
The world's support, and lord, and friend."

Rama's name is itself a charm, sure protection against Evil and the harbinger of Bliss. His life, dispassionately studied and pondered over, is full of lessons ennobling and elevating to mankind: it is a practical example of Virtue's triumph and a justification of the ways of God to man. It well illustrates the immortal accents of Sitha recorded in the Ramayana as follows:—

धर्मादर्थः प्रभवति धर्मात्प्रभवते सुखम् ।
धर्मेण लभते सर्वं धर्मसारमिदं जगत् ॥

ధర్మాదర్థః ప్రభవతి ధర్మాత్ప్రభవతే సుఖమ్ ।
ధర్మేణ లభతే సర్వం ధర్మసారమిదం జగత్ ॥

"The noblest gain from virtue springs,
And virtue joy unending brings,
All earthly blessings virtue sends;
On virtue all the world depends."

Bk. III. Canto 9. Sloka 30.